A LONDONER'S LOG-BOOK

1901–1902

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"*COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS*"

LGeorge William Erskine Russell
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H/9/03

"Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?"
Walter Churchey to William Cowper, 1786.

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TO

M. M.

WHO FIRST DETECTED THE LONDONER

HE INSCRIBES THESE

SHORT AND SIMPLE ANNALS

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A LONDONER'S LOG-BOOK

I

"It was a mild winter evening; a little fog still hanging about, but vanquished by the cheerful lamps, and the voice of the muffin-bell was just heard at intervals—a genial sound that calls up visions of trim and happy hearths. If we could only so contrive our lives as to go into the country for the first note of the nightingale, and return to town for the first note of the muffin-bell, existence, it is humbly presumed, might be more enjoyable."

February is upon us, and surely its peculiar charm was never better described than in the opening lines of the foregoing extract from *Lothair*. Lord Beaconsfield, a Londoner by birth, worshipped our glorious city as Matthew Arnold worshipped Oxford. To be sure, he never called it an "adorable dreamer"; and,

indeed, the phrase would scarcely have been appropriate. But he loved it as warmly as Samuel Johnson, and knew it as accurately as Samuel Weller — knew it, not merely in all the infinite variety of its exterior aspect, but also in its inner charm and spiritual significance. "One should always mention localities," he said, "because they often indicate character." Baker Street, indeed, and Gloucester Place, and Harley Street and Wimpole Street he likened to "a large family of plain children, with Portland Place and Portman Square for their respectable parents"; but "the Strand is perhaps the finest street in Europe, blending the architecture of many periods; and its river-ways are a peculiar feature and rich with associations. The Inns of Court, and the quarters in the vicinity of the port, Thames Street, Tower Hill, Billingsgate, Wapping, Rotherhithe are the best parts of London; they are full of character: the buildings bear a nearer relation to what the people are doing than in the more polished quarters."

The man who loves Billingsgate must be a Londoner indeed; and Lord Beaconsfield's

enthusiasm for his native city was not circumscribed by its legal boundaries. He had a tender feeling for despised Suburbia. "It seems to the writer that the inhabitants of London are scarcely sufficiently sensible of the beauty of its environs. With the exception of Constantinople, there is no city in the world that can for a moment enter into competition with it. For himself, though in his time something of a rambler, he is not ashamed in this respect to confess to a legitimate cockney taste; and for his part he does not know where life can flow on more pleasantly than in sight of Kensington Gardens, viewing the silver Thames wind by the bowers of Rosebank, or inhaling from its terraces the refined air of graceful Richmond."

Personally, I go all lengths with Lord Beaconsfield. When, after a temporary exile, I again smell the air of London, my heart leaps up like Wordsworth's when he saw a rainbow. To my mind life in this beloved town resembles a long, luxurious voyage, full of profit and pleasure and incident and health. And, if any of my fellow-travellers care to

inspect my Log-book, it is frankly at their disposal.

Just thirty years ago—on "Candlemas Day, 1871"—Mr. Matthew Arnold wrote his Dedicatory Letter to Adolescens Leo, Esq., of the *Daily Telegraph*. "We are now on the point of commencing what Arminius, with his fatally carping spirit, called our 'Thyestëan banquet of claptrap'—we are on the eve of the meeting of Parliament." This year the Thyestëan banquet-table is spread amid surroundings of appropriate gloom—continued disaster in South Africa, virulent ill-will on the part of our European neighbours, wars and rumours of wars, taxes and prospects of taxes. These are things which every one dislikes; but there is another feature of this year's banquet which is deplorable or satisfactory according to the onlooker's standpoint, and that is the collapse of our parliamentary system. That system, as till 1895 we understood it, postulated something like a balance of parties; a system of checks; a wholesome competition for public favour; a remorseless and untiring criticism directed by the "Outs" against the "Ins." All this

has departed, and instead of it we have a Government, tried for five years, found in some grave respects conspicuously wanting, and yet sent back to office with a majority which makes them safe for another five years; and an Opposition, puny in numbers, notoriously divided on every question of actual interest, incapable of effective criticism, and apparently reconciled to permanent exclusion from office.

One of the greatest of Parliamentarians, attacking the Government of the day, talked about "that state of insignificance for which God and Nature designed you." Our more modest Opposition substitutes "us" for "you," and, speaking by the mouth of its chief Whip on the eve of the General Election, meekly accepts insignificance as its appropriate and predestined portion. The Liberal oracles are dumb. Sir William Harcourt, having failed badly in his iconoclastic mission, betakes himself to financial criticism, but somehow cannot induce people to take him seriously in either department. Mr. Asquith is understood to be writing a treatise on "How to be for and against Annexation." Mr. Morley occasionally

ingeminates Peace, but the note is lachrymose, and neither alarms his opponents nor inspirits his friends. The Roseberyan faction dines together, eulogizes its patron, writes articles about itself, and insists on "explaining its motives, when its hearers have forgotten its acts." The worthy people who compose this clique take themselves very seriously, and, were parties evenly balanced, their support might be of some importance, because it would be worth buying. But, as it is, Lord Salisbury is quite strong enough to dispense with the services of such a very broken reed, and it is not the "Use of Sarum" to encumber himself with wholly unprofitable alliances.

But, after all, Westminster is not London; and though its doings form the natural topic for February, a Londoner must (like Observation) take an extended view, and survey the Church as well as the State. Here the outlook is happier. The State is rather sickly; the Church remarkably vigorous. That admirable liberty which its critics call licence, and which has survived a good many attempts to curb it, seems to be emerging triumphant from

its latest conflict. Episcopal coercion moves, as has been happily said, with a leaden foot in a velvet shoe. Those good men whose first article of faith is *I believe in an Established Church*, have begun to discover that it is safest to let Ritualism alone.

Lord Hugh Cecil, I observe, promises, or threatens legislation which shall curb the freedom of the parish priest, and give greater power both to the bishop and to the lay parishioners. This strikes me as an ominous conjuncture. Certainly those inhabitants of Hatfield whose memories run back ten or fifteen years may be excused if they feel a dread of what Lord Hugh calls "Rectorcraft." But, though the unfettered independence of the English incumbent has, like other human things, its drawbacks, it is in my judgment infinitely better for the interests of the Church than either an episcopal dictatorship such as our Holy Aunt, the Church of Rome, permits; or that sway of the rich Cheesemonger which is the bane of Nonconformity. But the Bishop and the Cheesemonger combined would indeed produce a tyranny against which the

meekest incumbent in Christendom would soon revolt.

Leaving these high questions of State and Church, which indeed are mainly suggested by the opening of Parliament and of Convocation, I turn to the social aspect of the month. Where all are good, it would be invidious to particularize, as Pennialinus used to say; and yet, socially considered, February has a charm among months which is all its own. That charm is partly due to climatic conditions. I am so loyal a Londoner that I admire even the climate of London, and can almost be lyrical about the fogs of its December and the smells of its July. And yet, undoubtedly, the interspace between the fogs and the smells is the Golden Age of Society. By February the fogs, as a rule, have disappeared. We no longer lose our way when we go out to dinner, nor are made prisoners in our houses by fear of bronchial asthma. We no longer are married (like Mr. Wilfred Ashley) under a pall of inky blackness; nor peer (like Lord Roberts) at our admirers through a cold haze of grey cotton-wool. Far ahead are the poisonous exhalations

of the dog-days, and the suffocative dinner-parties where men stare and gasp and women collapse. February, March, April, May are the choice months of social enjoyment, and of these I specially love February—as Cardinal Newman says,

> "not because it is best,
> But because it comes first,
> and is pledge of the rest."

As we advance along the vale of years, and become haunters of clubs and readers of magazines, social enjoyment begins to acquire new meanings for us. Emphatically it does not mean ball-going. I no longer waltz. I think the Kitchen Lancers undignified; and I am quite sure that three minutes of the Washington Post would destroy me. If by chance I ever yield to the importunities of a niece or a neighbour, and look in for a moment at a dance, I recoil with horror when I see the sprightly partners of my youth ranged in patient martyrdon on a hard bench, and drawing worsted shawls over their shoulders as dawn begins to peep. And, if I am thus moved when I look at them, what

must be their emotions when they recognize me?

When the ball-going instinct fails, one takes to evening parties; but, as one advances, even these seem hardly worth the trouble of getting to and getting from. Yet the sight of stars and ribbons still pleases me, and one hears things at political drums which one does not hear elsewhere. I recall such a drum in the spring of 1881, when a Liberal wirepuller said, with eager delight, to the wife of a Liberal leader: "Old Dizzy is very ill!" And the lady replied, with a wink of complacent intelligence, "Oh yes, I know. *Dying!*" Such are the festive topics of political society.

When drums have followed balls into the region of things which once were enjoyable and are so no longer, we find our social enjoyments practically reduced to dinners—for nobody who is well constituted in mind or body goes out to luncheon. February is preeminently a month of dinners, if for no other reason, because it brings Parliament together, and "Parliament-Men" are notoriously fond of dining. "Come and dine at 8—pot-luck, you

know. Don't dress." That hospitable formula recalls a genial knight who dwelt in Berkeley Square, and, applying his whole mind to the subject of dinners, attained to high perfection in the art of giving them. Two benevolent practices of his invention linger pleasantly in the memory. He caused each course to begin at a different point at the table, so that every guest in turn got the first chance at a dish. He dealt out the asparagus like cards, an equal number of pieces to each guest; and if, on the completion of the deal, he saw that any one had got smaller pieces than his neighbours, he used the residue to redress the inequality. Surely such are those actions of the just which smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

"The undevout gastronomer is mad,"

and I am as thankful as ever was Thackeray, that typical Londoner, to the hand which feeds me, whether it proffers those "ortolans stuffed with truffles and truffles stuffed with ortolans," which are the daily bread of the helots in Park Lane; or confines itself to the roast mutton and apple tart of my own lowlier

sphere. By far the wisest of the Prince Consort's recorded sayings was that "things taste so much better in small houses." In praising dinners, I praise, not magnificence, but comfort—and conversation.

The opening of Parliament brings of course a certain influx of parliamentary gossip into conversation. It begins on the eve of the Session at a ministerial drum. "Why are you in uniform?" "Oh, I've come from Balfour's dinner." "Oh, do tell us. Is there anything in the speech?" "Oh! only just what one knew already." From this illuminating commencement, it flows on during the earlier weeks of the Session, touching in turn on A's good speech, B's palpable falling-off, C's chance of office, and the mess that D is making of his work at the Circumlocution Office — till summer comes with its asparagus and plovers' eggs, and we all settle down to the serious pursuit of pleasure.

People say that parliamentary "shop" is dull, and I don't contradict; but I feel that it delivers one from worse bores. If it had not been for the opening of the Session, we

should still be arguing about the *Englishwoman's Love-letters*, which did so much to desolate December and January. Mystery did for that book what Puffery has done for others. We all remember novels of which the appearance was heralded by announcements that they would make Christianity henceforth impossible, or put the relation of the sexes on a permanently altered basis. The *Love-letters* came, as far as I know, unpuffed; but the mystery did its work. Every literary lady in London was saddled with the authorship, and numbers who were not known as authoresses were whispered to have written a great deal anonymously. Every one looked interesting and conscious, and repudiated the authorship with suggestive embarrassment. Then, again, the mystery gave great scope to man, poor man, dressed in a little brief anonymity. Well—no, he hadn't written them—couldn't indeed say much about them. But one had been in a position to know certain things—and well—when the authorship was disclosed it would surprise us all. This did very well for a time, and a good many absolutely virtuous people enjoyed a temporary

reputation for impropriety on the strength of a book which they had neither written nor read. But gradually the mists cleared away. When the critics began to pronounce the book tedious, the claimants for the authorship rapidly dwindled; and the reproach of vulgarity terrified many who would have gloried in riskiness. Presently all the conflicting rumours "crystallized" in a circumstantial story about an imaginative widow and an unfrocked priest. Then the bubble of mystery burst, and people awoke to the consciousness that they had been making a grotesque fuss about a thoroughly mediocre performance.

It takes some time for a literary revolution to make its way to the quarter, eminently genteel, but not central, where I live; and, when we found that we had been admiring the wrong book, the discovery was a heavy blow to our parochial conversation. Ours is a very sociable parish. The Vicar's wife had what is called "a little money"; is At Home on Thursdays, and has her drawing-room walled with Morris's pomegranate paper. The Vicarage is the social centre of a considerable Square, and at least

six circumjacent streets. The Vicar ("privately educated" in boyhood) is of King's College, Cambridge. His admirers say that he is "a typical King's man," which, being interpreted, means a Cambridge man who tries to be like an Oxford man. His academical career culminated in an Ægrotat in Botany; but he loves culture and ensues it. There are dark rumours in the parish that the smoking flax of his faith was nearly quenched by *Robert Elsmere*, but quickened into fresh life by the opportune publication of *Lux Mundi*. He repudiates the old-fashioned designations of High, Low, and Broad; but, if pressed, coyly avows himself of the "Deep Church." In externals he cultivates what may be described as Milliner's Ritual, and his preaching is garnished with quotations from the more familiar poetry of Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold. The name of our National Bard is often on his lips; Jowett's *Plato* is on his study-table; and he has been heard to speak gushingly of "dear old Aristotle." But his chief desire is to be in the movement, and to keep abreast of the latest thinking. Last Advent he held us spell-

bound with a course of lectures on "The Theological Aspects of Mr. Swinburne's Poetry"; and his Christmas sermon on *The Master Christian* was found, by the ladies of his flock, to be "very teaching." To such a one, the *Love-letters* were a very treasure-trove, and we were not without hope that they might furnish material for some Lenten lectures which should rival Sir Barnes Newcome's celebrated course on Mrs. Hemans and the Poetry of the Affections.

But alas for the cussedness of things! Before the Lectures can be delivered, the Letters have gone out of fashion, and, from a remark dropped at the Vicarage last Thursday, I gather that we are to have some conferences on the Spiritual Life of English Statesmen, as illustrated by the recent biographies of Cromwell, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir John Mowbray.

An incongruous figure has been added to the cultured circle of the Vicarage by the introduction of the new curate. This strapping youth played football for his college, and even a year at Wells has failed to eradicate certain secular tendencies. He is large and loud, and cheerful and boisterous: whereas the Vicar is grave and

soulful, and tender and winning. The curate smacks one on the back, when the vicar would lay a lily hand caressingly on one's shoulder. The Vicar recites mystical morsels of Rossetti, and the curate, without much pressing, sings—

> "With a ladder and some glasses,
> You could see the 'Ackney Marshes,
> If it wasn't for the 'ouses in between."

His frank avowal that he thought Hendrik Ibsen "a fair old rotter" caused a painful sensation at the Vicarage tea-table, nor did he mend matters by his story of the little boy who confessed to his uncle that he had taken a surreptitious sip out of his whisky-and-soda, and, thinking it nasty, had "put it all back again."

The curate laughed immoderately at his own anecdote. The Vicar smiled a smile which was deprecating even to the verge of sickliness; and the Vicar's wife hurriedly turned the conversation to the poetry of Mr. Stephen Phillips. At this juncture I made arrangements to leave, and in the street was overtaken by the curate, who asked if I happened to have got a smoke about me, and promised (quite unsolicited) to look me up the first time he came my way.

II

LIKE Mr. Matthew Arnold, I am a "feeble unit" of the Great Middle Class, and I dwell among my own people. The district of Suburbia in which stress of financial weather long ago compelled me to seek anchorage is inhabited exclusively by the Middle Class. Our only link with the much-loved aristocracy of our native land is the Dowager Lady Farringford, who lives in one of the large houses in Stucco Gardens. It is a rather rusty link, for Lady Farringford's (like the owl's in the "Elegy") is an "ancient, solitary reign." She must be getting on in years, for it will be remembered that she once met Lothair at dinner at Mr. Putney Giles's — she, at any rate, has not forgotten it — but her social sway is still acknowledged by the inhabitants of Stucco Square, Stucco Street, and Upper and Lower Stucco Place. As to the solitari-

ness of her reign, she probably likes it, feeling (with John Wesley) that there is "no hurt," but rather great advantage, in "an authority which I exercise solely, with no colleagues therein." The appearance of a second coronet in the Gardens would seriously disturb Lady Farringford's equanimity. By destroying her solitariness, it would shake her authority. But at present she has to encounter no rival titles more formidable than those of Lady Le Draughte (widow of the famous accoucheur Sir Grosvenor Le Draughte); an ex-Lady Mayoress; and the derelict wife of a K.C.I.E.

Turning from the summit to the base of the social edifice, I note that our parish contains no poor, unless the dependent classes who grow parasitically on the seedy splendour of Stuccovia can be dignified by that name. This is quite as well; for, if we had any poor, they would fare badly in a district where social claims on narrow incomes leave little margin for almsgiving, and where the Church directs its efforts towards culture rather than comfort. Last year our Vicar, the Rev. Lancelot Ludovic Soulsby—for I love to write his name at full

length—yielding to pietistic pressure, organized a Parochial Mission, but conducted it on lines peculiarly his own. He obtained his missioners from the Kyrle Society, and they preached on the Social Gospel of Æstheticism to an audience composed of maidservants and laundresses, with two helpers from the livery-yard, and the jobbing gardener who looks after the Square. The Mission, though unattended by any visible effect on the ethics of the parish, left one permanent memorial in the shape of a Parochial Club and Institute. In this "temple of luxury and ease" (to quote Mr. Gladstone's description of what the National Liberal Club was *not* to be) alcoholic drinks and smoking are forbidden, and cards discountenanced. But there is a "Saturday Social" of music, readings, and lemonade; and physical culture is represented by a boxing class, where anæmic clerks and shuffling shopmen pay an annual subscription for the privilege of being knocked down by the curate.

In brief, as I said at the beginning, our parish is a stronghold of the Middle Class. We are well aware that it is the fashion to

laugh at us. We have never forgotten that Charles Kingsley (who was one of us) turned against us, declaring that the House of Lords contained all the genius and all the virtue of the country, and that it would soon monopolize all the beauty. This rankled; and, before we had recovered from the smart, we were assailed in the opposite quarter, and were told by eloquent Canons that true hearts were only found in slums, and that the possession of a fixed income was incompatible with moral rectitude. Now, like the reforming Lord Grey, "I stand by my order" (though a humbler one than his Lordship's), and I profess that dispositions as kindly, and consciences as tender, and principles as strict may be found in Suburbia and Stuccovia as in Mayfair or Bethnal Green. Our participation in the national mourning of last month [1] was as genuine as that of the aristocracy or the democracy, and helped to explain Lord Salisbury's cryptic remark that, if he wanted to know what the Middle Class thought, he applied to the Queen for information. Sorrow makes people sincere, and grief ennobles them.

[1] January, 1901.

The Middle Class is seen at its best in mourning. But there comes an end to all things—even to the obsequies and panegyrics of a peerless Queen—and, in the reaction from grief, I confess that we did not show to equal advantage.

The Vicar's lecture on the Historical Basis of Punch and Judy, with limelight illustrations, (for the benefit of the Parochial Club), has been postponed indefinitely. Mrs. Soulsby has given up her Thursday At Homes till after Easter, and has crowned her parlour-maid's cap with a black bow of unusual dimensions. This is our way of observing Court mourning, and is copied from the crape band which encircles the arm of Lady Farringford's stunted footman. All this is as it should be; but, though ceremonial tea-drinking is abandoned, we come together, as it were fortuitously, in the Vicarage drawing-room. Generally the curate, Mr. Bumpstead—"Blazer Bumpstead," as his Oxford friends call him—and I are the only representatives of our sex, and we chivalrously replenish the samovar, and hand sugared cakes to the parochial ladies of St. Ursula's, Stucco Gardens. "A foolish saint, my dear," grunts

old Lady Farringford, "with her eleven thousand virgins. She would have done much better with half the number of young men." Well, the eleven thousand, or some of them, with their mothers and married sisters, drop in to tea at the Vicarage in spite of the formal abandonment of the At Homes, and their conversation shows a marked reaction from the gloom of last month. "Where did you go to see the Funeral?" "Mr. Bounderley gave us such good places at his club." "I thought the King looked so ill." "Did you? We thought he looked much better than when we saw him at the garden-party." "Oh! we shall have plenty of chances of seeing *him* again. I could only look at the Emperor. How *splendid* he looked! and it was *so* nice of him to come." "Yes," interjects a Cambridge friend of the Vicar's who had just slipped in, "he is quite the nicest Emperor I know. I once sat between him and Mommsen at dinner at Potsdam, and, do you know, I found myself all the time talking to the Emperor—he was then Prince—in preference to the Professor."

Here, as the conversation begins to soar

dangerously high, we Stuccovians turn hastily to less exalted but safer themes. "Will there be Drawing-rooms after Easter?" "Well, I have a cousin in the Lord Chamberlain's Office who said he shouldn't be surprised if there were." "*She* had them, I believe; but then it was only an uncle, and that makes such a difference." "Well, I don't mean to go this year anyhow. I shall wait till my girl comes out. Dear Lady Farringford offers to present her, and of course it would be much cheaper —only one train instead of two—but I really think I must make an effort and go. It will be such a happiness to see the dear child and the King together." "Will he kiss her?" "Well, that's what I want to know. Lady Le Draughte says she was kissed by King William." "Really! I always knew she must be rather old, but had no idea she remembered William the Third." "William the *Fourth*, mamma; how *can* you be so absurd?" "Well, I said William the Fourth, didn't I? And in those days they had Drawing-rooms in the evening. George the Fourth did—or was it George the Third?" "How much

nicer that must have been! I wonder if the new King will go back to them. What do you think, dear Lady Farringford? You understand these things so well." "Well, some of the women would be very thankful for the change, I know that. Those made-up complexions, like Mrs. Bounderley's, look terrible in the daylight."

Thus flows the sparkling stream of question, answer, and exclamation; and the male mind involuntarily reverts to Mr. Gilbert's couplet—

> "Though I'm anything but clever,
> I could talk like this for ever;"

but presently the stream curves into a new channel. Dress becomes the topic. Our visitor from Cambridge, who is a bachelor, comes out strong on drapery and chitons. "Oh! a mourning Drawing-room will be excellent. All women look their best in black; all girls in white. Mrs. Soulsby, I *hope* you'll go, and do give a Drawing-room tea after it. I should so love to see you in black, with jet, like Night." And then the floodgates are opened, and a deluge of millinery carries all before it. Mr. Soulsby slips

in for his cup of peptonized milk, and is "oppressively bland and fond" as he greets his friend from Cambridge. "Blazer" Bumpstead thinks it is time for him to go and prepare, by a breather on his bicycle, for the pastoral duty of pounding a draper's assistant at the Parochial Club. And I go forth companionless to leave a card on our local M.P., Mr. Bounderley, whose name was heard in the above-reported dialogue.

Mr. Bounderley is one of the mysteries of politics; and I — alas! an idle man — have devoted some care to the work of ascertaining what he was and how he came to be where he is.

By the device of comparing "Dod's Parliamentary Companion" with the "Pall Mall Guide to the House of Commons" — or, in other words, what our Member would have us believe about him with what his detractors allege—I have arrived at certain conclusions. Joseph Barrington Bounderley was the son of Joseph Bounderley of Newington Butts, by a daughter of —— Barrington, Esq. He was born in 1840, and educated at University

College School. He seems to have gone early into the City, and to have reached an important position in a house which, in the 'sixties, had practically a monopoly of the clay pipe and dolls' eyes business. In 1870 he emulated that good apprentice who founded the Ducal House of Leeds, and married his master's daughter; nor is this wonderful, for although his figure has run to seed, he is still *très bel homme*, with a waxed moustache and an ensanguined complexion. Soon after his marriage, he deserted Newington for the more eligible locality of Stuccovia, then first raising its head amid cabbage-beds and market-gardens. In the year of his translation he took the decisive step of dropping "Joseph" from his signature, and has since been known to his friends and the world as "J. Barrington Bounderley." Of late he has developed a hyphen between the names, and his wife is Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley, to the unspeakable indignation of Lady Farringford, who "remembers them when they came, my dear. No one would speak to them in those days. He was something in the City — no human

being knew what. She was a pawnbroker's daughter, and her fortune was made out of teaspoons. At least that's what people said. Of course, it mayn't be true, and one should never repeat that kind of story; but really, when I hear them calling themselves *Barrington*-Bounderley, and pretending to be cousins of dear Eric Barrington, I cannot contain myself."

Once domiciled in Stucco Street, Mr. Barrington-Bounderley lost no opportunity of establishing his position. He volunteered to carry the plate in church (coloured almsbags had not then been introduced), and not seldom he presided at Penny Readings. He entered public life by the lowly door of the Vestry, and conquered more worlds by becoming a member of the Metropolitan Board of Works, of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and of the School Board for London. As time went on, his neighbours noticed that he went less and less to the City; and a rumour got abroad that the business (whether it was clay pipes or teaspoons) had been turned into a Company, and that Mr. Bounderley had bene-

fited by the conversion. As he went less and less to business, he went more and more to Boards. The creation of the London County Council was a golden opportunity. He became one of the representatives of our district, and his great speech on the "Quality of the Underclothing supplied to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade" was published as a pamphlet, with a commendatory note which ran something like this:—

"BERKELEY SQUARE: *Tuesday.*

"DEAR BOUNDERLEY,—You have handled this difficult and delicate matter with excellent tact and skill. You have soothed the public sensitiveness, without wounding the manhood of the Brigade. I pledge myself to the truth of every word in your pamphlet, and wish it the widest circulation. Neither our flannels nor our empire must be suffered to shrink.—Yours, R."

It now became evident, even to the dullest onlooker, that Mr. Bounderley meditated some decisive move. "Never tell me that he cared for schools, or drains, or hospitals," cried Lady

Farringford. "I always said all that was imposture. What he cares about is getting on. And that odious woman would give her eyes to be an M.P.'s wife." *Rem acu tetigisti*, dear Lady Farringford. Mr. Barrington-Bounderley had resolved to write himself M.P., and Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley saw her way to challenging your social supremacy in Stuccovia. When first he dwelt among us, Mr. Bounderley was not known to have any political opinions. "My interest is in social work," he would say; and the statement endeared him to the choice spirits who gathered round Mrs. Soulsby's tea-table. But, when repeated elections had demonstrated beyond a doubt that Conservatism had got Suburbia, in Australian phrase, "by the wool," Mr. Barrington-Bounderley disclosed his interior convictions. He was a Progressive Conservative. As such he joined our Constitutional and Unionist Association, and soon put new life into a rather somnolent concern. Before long he was its President; and Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley superseded Lady Farringford as Dame Dominant of the Primrose League. "Not that I mind," said the dowager;

"I always thought the whole business vulgarity itself; and the subscriptions were endless. It is just the thing for people like the Bounderleys —jobbery by means of snobbery!"

The plans were well laid, and the psychological moment was at hand. Our good old member, General Tufto, injudiciously made a night of it at the Conservative Club, on the occasion of a dinner to Mr. Arthur Balfour; and "gout, flying upward, soared with him to another clime." The vacancy occurred suddenly. Neither side was prepared with a candidate. Three members of the Constitutional Association met with closed doors, and implored Mr. Barrington-Bounderley to stand.

His address came out next morning. He was profoundly attached to our great institutions in Church and State, and would resist to the last any attempt to dismember the Empire. He would support the Crown, the House of Lords, and the Established Church, as the surest guarantees of popular freedom. He was keenly in favour of better Housing for the Poor, and would throw his whole heart into Social Reform. At the same time, we must

be careful that philanthropic zeal should not lead to increase of fiscal burdens; and, while earnestly deprecating the evils of intemperance, he would never consent to interfere with the legitimate enjoyments of the toiling masses. So vote for Barrington-Bounderley.

BOUNDERLEY AND THE UNION!
BOUNDERLEY AND BETTER TIMES!!
BOUNDERLEY AND AN OPEN BIBLE!!!
BOUNDERLEY AND PURE BEER!!!!

The contest was short, sharp, and decisive. The Liberals, stunned by this sudden thunderbolt, could not find a candidate. The Social Democrats, in back parlour assembled, ran a crystal-souled enthusiast who polled six votes, and was shortly afterwards convicted of cheating the Metropolitan Railway Company out of a threepenny fare. Barrington-Bounderley was returned triumphantly. Lord Salisbury sent him a telegram of congratulation; and the Constitutional cause was saved. Since that memorable day the seat has not been challenged; and it is but bare justice to say that our Member works hard to keep it. His life

is one long public meeting. He never leaves a letter unanswered. He subscribes to every benevolent object. Though, as an enemy discovered, he deals at the Stores, he has stated in a public address that (like General Goldsworthy) he employs "thirty-three local tradesmen." He toils like a galley-slave to get his constituents into the Gallery of the House of Commons, and he gives their wives strawberries and tea on the terrace. At Christmas each of us receives a triptych of white and gold, which, being opened, discloses Mr. and Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley simpering at one another across a Union Jack. Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley's *Crêche*, Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley's Innocuous Sweets-Shop, Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley's School of Popular Calisthenics, Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley's Ladies' Association for Reforming Workhouse Bonnets, are among the most valued and most popular institutions, not only of our parish, but of our borough. She has been presented at the Drawing-room by the wife of a Cabinet Minister. She has written her name at Marlborough House, and bounded over the green

sward of Buckingham Palace. Her neat little victoria (though horsed from the livery-yard in Stucco Mews West) has quite eclipsed that archaic landau which—for carriage-painters are expensive—still bears the arms of the late Lord Farringford; and her evening parties, graced by Taper, Tadpole, Mr. Ranville-Ranville, and the Stiltstalkings, are voted by their frequenters an improvement on Mrs. Soulsby's Thursday afternoons.

III

When I left Mrs. Soulsby's tea-table to call on Mr. Barrington-Bounderley, I had an eye to business. My wife, "poor wretch" (as Mr. Pepys would have said), has a taste for the vain pomp and glory of the world not easy to gratify in Stuccovia, where life is rather drab. Misled by a mendacious Press, she struggled through frost and fog, by Underground and omnibus, to St. James's Palace, in the early hours of January 24, intent on hearing King Edward VII. proclaimed. Her notion of what the ceremony imported was, I think, vague; but she was animated by the conviction that "it will be a great thing to be able to say one heard it"; and, when she found that "it" had taken place an hour before she arrived at the Palace, her mortification was acute. To soothe the pangs of disappointment was at once my duty and my wisdom, and I therefore consented to ask Mr. Bounderley

if he could arrange for my wife to see the King's procession at the opening of Parliament. A place on the route seemed unattainable, for Stuccovia has no visiting relations with Carlton House Terrace, and the officialdom of Whitehall gives its windows on the principle of "cutlet for cutlet," or, more classically, *do ut des*. But my wife fancied that Mr. Bounderley would have no difficulty in getting her into the Corridor of the House of Lords, and I was charged to convey the request. The result was pretty much what I had expected. Mr. Bounderley would have been delighted, if only it had been possible. What a pity I had not spoken two days sooner! He had just promised his places to the Cashingtons—those people who had lately taken the large corner house in Stucco Gardens, and were building out a billiard-room at the back. It was really provoking. But another time he would be only too charmed to do anything, and would make a note of it, &c., &c. So my mission proved abortive, nor, in truth, did I wholly regret it. My wife dislikes crowds and draughts, though her loyalty would carry her through even greater trials.

She cannot stand long, is easily tired, and when she is tired — dear soul! — is a little inclined to be peevish. Furthermore, I have always observed that contact with the great world, though it momentarily exhilarates her, produces a reaction; and that she is happier after one of Mrs. Bounderley's parties at the Botanical Gardens, or of Mrs. Soulsby's musical teas, than when she has been rubbing shoulders (if so familiar an expression may be allowed) with Britain's aristocracy. The standing mortification of her life is the social success of a former schoolfellow, who married a rising politician, and has contrived to push and squeeze and wriggle herself into prominence. "When I see that horrid little Dodo in a front row, with Lord Stiltstalking in one of her pockets and Lord Decimus Tite-Barnacle in the other, I *can't* help remembering how different she was at Miss Pinkerton's. Certainly, times have changed with her, and I am sure I don't envy her. I wouldn't have married that man for worlds. But I must say it does make one angry to see her making such a fool of the Bishop of Barchester. If I were Mrs. Proudie, I should let her know what

I thought."—κ.τ.λ. This being my dear one's habitual frame of mind, and it being quite certain that the detested "Dodo" would have loomed large at the opening of Parliament, I felt a certain relief when the good Bounderley began to reel off his transparent excuses; and, when he offered to compound by getting me into the Gallery of the House of Commons for the debate on the Address, I felt a sweet contentment in the great system of Compensation.

Why does one enjoy going to the House of Commons? I find it difficult to answer the question. In order to enter its precincts one has to undergo the worst evils of bureaucracy —the patronizing authority of the Policeman and the high-handed insolence of the Doorkeeper. The old traditions of eloquence, sarcasm, wit, and similar ornaments of debate are as obsolete as Pitt's pigtail and Fox's knee-breeches. To dine in the Strangers' Room is to face the risk of finding your smelt spliced with a toothpick. The system of ventilation (if that can be properly so called which is no

ventilation and all system) is notoriously productive of influenza.

> "What then should tempt me on these stormy seas,
> Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?"

Well, as a person detached from party, and perhaps more inclined to idol-breaking than to hero-worship, I take my pleasure rather in the ironies than in the enthusiasms of the House. I like to see the champion of the Unauthorized Programme lashing his former followers into impotent fury. I like to see Mr. Morley meditating on the evil way of the Liberal world, and babbling o' Green Flags instead of, as in the old days, nailing them to his mast. I like, too, to note the contrast between the "bald and bilious men," with baggy trousers and amorphous boots, who occupy the Liberal benches, and the "well-groomed" young Tories who jeer at them across the floor. That epithet "well-groomed" gives me pause. Like the Paris correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, when he heard of "Delicacy," I exclaim, "Surely I have heard that word before." What is happening to me? Why, in my old age,

have I taken to writing journalese? "Well-groomed" is journalese for "well-dressed"; and no living creature except Pennialinus ever said the one for the other. Let it be bound in one bundle of abominations with "trend," and "affray," and "transpire" in the sense of "happen," and "it goes without saying," and "a new departure," and "much in evidence." Let all such sayings be bound in bundles for the burning, and perish from the lips of men.

Another element of pleasure in Parliament is incongruity. Sir Henry Fowler as the embodiment of the Imperial instinct, Sir William Harcourt as the white-souled champion of spiritual religion, Mr. Asquith as the convinced advocate of farm-burning and annexation, the author of *Compromise* as the parliamentary interpreter of the Nonconformist conscience—all these phenomena have the charm of incongruity; but I almost think that Mr. Balfour, as the fatherly critic of ritualistic excesses, is the most charming of all—even more delightfully incongruous than Lord Selborne as the rollicking seaman, and Mr. Brodrick as the

judge of military etiquette. I was reading the other day a description of Mr. Balfour by the parliamentary correspondent of a Nonconformist newspaper. We cannot, I think, be wrong in attributing it to a female hand, and, even among the triumphs of these later days in the way of personal journalism, the authoress must be admitted to have distinguished herself. "The white patch above Mr. Balfour's ears has become very conspicuous. It looks like a feather stuck in his hair. When it wanders all over his head, and all the hair is white, it will be very beautiful." Will it indeed? A white feather wandering all over one's head will surely be a novel and rather a barbaric ornament. "If we did not dissolve we should be showing the white feather," quoth Mr. Gladstone on a famous occasion. Mr. Balfour, showing a whole headful of white feathers, is a vision which would lend itself with fatal facility to "F. C. G.'s" sarcastic art. Excellent lady-correspondent of *Baptist Bits!* "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." But, ludicrous as is the picture which the lady has drawn, it is not more entertaining

than Mr. Balfour's performance on Mr. Austin Taylor's amendment. To see the high-dried bachelor of fifty-four, famed for his aloofness alike from domestic trammels and from ecclesiastical attachments, dogmatizing about the undesirability of "Children's Eucharists" and the evils of Confession, was surely to see the very crown and triumph of incongruity. "Quote publicans on liquor-laws, or slave-drivers on the capacities of blacks; cite Martial as a witness to purity, or Bacchus to sobriety; put Danton to conduct a bloodless revolution, or swear in the Gracchi as special constables; but do not set up the late Mr. Buckle as a judge of anything that is called a religion or a clergy"—nor the defender of Philosophic Doubt as a competent critic of men's self-abasement or children's prayers.

The Gallery of the House of Commons, in spite of all its drawbacks, supplies just now what the advertizers call a felt want. Social gaiety is for the time extinguished. Of my wife, as of Wordsworth's Michael, it may be truly said that her mind is "keen, intense, and frugal," and she was prompt to recognize the

opportunity of decent retrenchment afforded by the public mourning. "Of course, we can't give any dinners till after Easter; and then every one is away for a week or two, and all our friends know perfectly well that our dining-room is *much* too small for parties in the hot weather; so this year we shan't be obliged to do anything, and it certainly will be an immense saving." So, instead of entertaining Mr. Bounderley with all the delicacies of the season, I consume his substance at the House of Commons. I don't imagine that he enjoys settling the bill; but one must suffer in order to be beautiful, and one must pay in order to be parliamentary. And I am convinced that my M.P. finds some compensation for his unwilling disbursements in the opportunity of saying before a constituent, "My dear Cranborne, you did that capitally," or, "Austen, my boy, you're a chip of the old block."

But let it not be supposed that the House of Commons (or, again to quote Pennialinus, "St. Stephen's") is my only joy. Stuccovia does not lack its chastened recreations. My dear wife insists that Wednesday evenings

in Lent should be kept clear of social entanglements—

"Well I know the ways of women when they get an evening free—
How they roast a goodly chicken, add the urn, and call it Tea."

On Wednesdays, therefore, we have "High Tea" at seven; and then, with feelings akin to those of Juvenal's friend when he carried a crude peacock into his bath, I carry an unassimilated sausage to Mr. Soulsby's weekly service. I think I said before that our good Vicar is eager to keep abreast of the latest book-making (if I may use that word in an unracing sense). The simultaneous publication of biographies of Cromwell, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir John Mowbray gave him an opening which he was not the man to miss; and his course of meditations on "The Spiritual Life of English Statesmen" was widely advertized and has been numerously attended. All Stuccovia's noblest and most thoughtful—the very elect of St. Ursula's parish, the "Fishers in Deep Waters," as the Vicar calls them—have rallied round these spirit-searching discourses.

The Vicar, nothing daunted by some seeming incompatibilities between his four heroes, has reconciled them all by gravely enouncing the impressive canon that "the wider divergence is the higher unity." No one except Mr. Soulsby could have said that; but it seems to be characteristic of the Deep Church that on its lips language loses all recognized meaning. With Mr. Soulsby the Athanasian Creed is a carol, and the Commination Service is a serenade, and sin is an illness and crime an accident; and "Depart, ye cursed," means "Come, ye blessed"; and Yes is No, and black is white, and the night before last means the day after to-morrow. No wonder, then, that the Meditations are popular with the cultured ladies of Stuccovia, or that the Fishers in Deep Waters murmured that the delay in filling the See of London was due to Mr. Soulsby's conscientious hesitations.

On Sunday mornings in Lent our pulpit is occupied by a preacher from a distance, who, like a famous Dean, has "so much taste, and all so very bad." He is preaching a course on "Six Precious Stones, and their Spiritual

Symbolisms," with illustrative passages from the English poets. These manifold exercises of culture are characterized by our curate as "a bit thick," and he owns himself "fairly out of it." His exuberant energies are bestowed on schools and sick-rooms, club-management, and district-visiting, for Mr. Soulsby cannot endure smells, and turns sea-green in an exhausted atmosphere; whereas "Blazer" Bumpstead is "as fit as they make 'em"; and his chest-measurement is incessantly expanded by his Saturday afternoon's "Rugger." "Socker," he will tell you in a jovial bellow, "is only fit for sloppy girls." What strange freak of fate was it that unequally joined Mr. Soulsby with this Philistine yoke-fellow?

Let no one dream that because Stuccovia is "remote" from the fashionable world, and "unfriended" by the aristocracy, it is therefore "melancholy" or "slow." We are quick in our pursuit of culture, and banish melancholy by the aid of Lectures.

Thus, the other night the Town Hall was—not indeed filled, but occupied, by an intelligent audience gathered together to hear the eminent

barrister, Mr. Kewsey, lecture on the Humourists of Queen Victoria's Reign. One lecture is, to the outward eye, very like another. The large, draughty room, the half-empty benches, the earnest but dowdy appearance of the assembled ladies, the desk covered with green baize, and the bottle of water. As regards these externals the scene has been drawn with inimitable fidelity by Mr. Matthew Arnold. Would that he could have heard the opening sentence of Mr. Kewsey's discourse on the Victorian humourists: "Charles Dickens had, strictly speaking, no humour." That brick enables one, I think, to judge pretty fairly of the house that Kewsey built.

But services and lectures do not exhaust the possibilities of Stuccovia's dissipation. We are nothing if not cultured; and Drawing-room Readings come in with the east winds of March, and rival them in severity. In one of the flats in Lower Stucco Place dwells an emancipated poetess, of uncertain nationality. She professes to be a lineal descendant of Aphra Behn, and to be related maternally to George Sand. She has associated herself, for the purposes of our

drawing-room readings, with a professional reciter, a

> "Francesca da Rimini,
> Niminy Piminy,
> *Je ne sais quoi* young man;"

and, discarding their patronymics, these artists advertize themselves as "Eloisa and Abelard." Admission to the readings is half-a-crown a head, and the proceeds are divided between the War-Funds and the Kyrle Society. The poetess, draped in sage green, with a silver fillet round her dishevelled locks, declaims her sapphics with an energy which recalls Theodora's performance at Lothair's coming-of-age. "There was a tumult of her brow, especially in the address to Liberty, that was sublime—quite a Mænad look."

An effective contrast to this passionate energy is supplied by the morbid and sepulchral gloom of the young reciter, whose voice awakens sympathetic tears, as he fixes his cavernous eyes on vacancy, and begins in a spectral undertone—

> "Billy's dead and gone to glory—
> So is Billy's sister Nell;
> And I know a tale about them,
> Were I poet, I could tell."

"People who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like," and this is emphatically the sort of thing that Stuccovia likes. Stuccovia dreads humour and contemns comedy as vulgar; and hence arises our chief difficulty in the way of private theatricals. Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley, who really has a pretty wit, proposed to dramatize the *Little Dinner at Timmins's*, and, having also a neat foot, chose for herself the part of Rosa, which she could have played to perfection. But all Stuccovia rose in indignant protest against Truncheon and Mrs. Gashleigh, and the silver bread-basket and the smashed christening-bowl. They vowed that they had always detested Thackeray's spirit; that his tone was base and his view of life cynical. Besides which, nobody read him nowadays. We had "got beyond poor Thackeray," and, if there was to be anything in the way of theatricals, let it be something which really "touched the depths"; something which one could feel—something "actual" and "convincing." These murmurs had their origin at the Vicarage, where Mr. Soulsby had formed, "in the gloomy

recesses of a mind capacious of such things," a design of dramatizing *Robert Elsmere*. To body forth the spiritual perplexities of Robert, was, he felt, a task peculiarly adapted to his own powers; and that he should fall in love with Mrs. Soulsby playing Madame de Netteville would be a touch of domestic pathos worthy of the Kendals. So far, all was plain sailing; but there were rocks ahead in the arrangement of the cast. Clearly the Squire could not be cut; yet neither "Blazer" Bumpstead nor Mr. Barrington-Bounderley was the least adapted to the part—and men are scarce in Stuccovia. Ladies, indeed, are plentiful with us; but on this occasion they proved recalcitrant, and, as the scheme developed itself, gave it plainly to be understood that they thought Mrs. Soulsby had made an immense mistake in choosing the part of Madame de Netteville, when that of Catherine lay ready to her hand. "She is positively cut out for Catherine," said dear old Lady Farringford; "for Catherine was a good creature, but a frump and a bore. It is so odd that people never know their own limitations." So our

theatrical designs fell through; but the Vicarage was not to be defeated. Early in the year the Vicar had announced a lecture on the "Historical Basis of Punch and Judy." This entertainment had been postponed indefinitely on account of the public mourning, but it was now announced for Mi-Carême, and came off with immense success. The lecturer's line was something like this: (1) The beginning of human society; (2) The dramatic instinct; (3) The history of dramatic art; (4) The Miracle Plays of the Middle Age; (5) The itinerant dramatist; (6) "Punch and Judy," how evolved; (7) "Punch and Judy," how encrusted with farcical association; (8) "Punch and Judy" spiritually interpreted. The spiritual interpretation proved to be that Punch symbolized the Tyranny of Brute Force, Convention, and Animalism; while Judy stood for the Supernatural Element in Life, Aspiration, and the "Woman-Movement." I confess that ever since I heard this interpretation of the familiar phenomena I have watched Mr. Punch's wife-beating exercises with a sympathy unknown before.

IV

An eminent Publicist, having attained a coveted distinction, was entertained by his disappointed competitors and other friends at a banquet. In responding to the toast of his health, the hero of the occasion expressed a lively satisfaction at seeing himself surrounded by so many men of intellectual eminence, for, said he, it had always been his aim in life to associate with those who were intellectually his superiors. Whereupon Lord Houghton, who had been a little fatigued by the oratorical exercises of the evening, exclaimed in a stertorous undertone, "By G—, it wasn't difficult to do that!"

Well, I am of the same mind as the Publicist, and my desire—not easily gratified in Stuccovia—has always been to rub shoulders with the learned and the literary.

It is one of the privileges of authorship,

even on the humblest scale, that it may bring the author into correspondence with men of similar tastes and superior information. Thus Horace Walpole corresponded with Sir Horace Mann, and Gilbert White with Thomas Pennant, and Mr. Casaubon with Carp of Brasenose.

So, if I may compare small things with great, these humble extracts from my Log-book have brought me a letter from the learned editor of Hiccadocius' *De Barbis Judæorum* (an author originally discovered, I believe, by the late Rev. F. E. Paget).

A minute and scrupulous exactness in the use of words—a verbal *ἀκρίβεια*, if I may so express myself—has ever been the characteristic of true scholars; and a playful insistence on the precise shades of meaning has been the material of their mutual pleasantry. "A dictionary, now!" exclaimed Dr. Strong's admirer. "What a useful work a dictionary is! What a necessary work! The meanings of words! Without Doctor Johnson, or somebody of that sort, we might have been at this present moment calling an Italian-iron a bedstead."

I am led to these reflections, which, I feel, have something in common with the Diversions of Purley, by the acute criticism of my learned correspondent. Last month I ventured to express dislike of the epithet "well-groomed," as applied by Pennialinus to the young Tories in the House of Commons; and I affirmed (or "claimed," as Pennialinus himself would say) that it meant nothing more than "well-dressed." But the Editor of "Hiccadocius," in a letter which bears the Cambridge post-mark, takes me to task, and says, "The odious expression, in my mind, implies also that particular neatness and glossiness of hair which you notice in A.D.C.'s, Guardsmen, 10th Hussars, and a few of the younger nobility, and Eton boys."

This criticism, proceeding from an authoritative quarter, set me, as Burke says, on thinking. Does "well-groomed" necessarily imply a certain quality or condition of the hair? And what is the characteristic which is common to the hair of A.D.C.'s, Guardsmen, 10th Hussars, young nobility, and Eton boys?

The moment I approached this quest I felt myself heavily handicapped by my insufficient

familiarity with smart society. I hope my readers have long since inferred, even though a self-respecting reticence forbade me to declare it, that both my wife and I are exceedingly well born. My wife was one of the Topham-Sawyers, of The Sawpits. The head of my family is a baronet, and would have had a peerage long before this, only the Whip rudely said that if he desired that elevation he would have to put his Bloody Hand into his pocket. But *stemmata quid faciunt?* In these plutocratic days a long pedigree unsupported by a long purse gives no access to the circles where my critic is so terribly at ease. As to Eton boys, their rapacity in the matter of tips has long made me a stranger to their society. The younger nobility treats the dances of Stuccovia with the contempt they deserve, and something more. As to the Guards and the 10th Hussars, we should be as likely to entertain the Crowned Heads of Europe and the College of Cardinals. Indeed, my wife thinks herself uncommonly lucky if she can induce a spring captain of the Loamshire Regiment — the "old Blow-Hards," they are affectionately called — to fling his

radiance (as the late Mr. J. R. Green would say) over our smartest dinner-party of the season. There was, indeed, one instance out of all those cited by my critic with which I felt a kind of vague familiarity—the instance of the A.D.C.'s. But, on reflection, even that familiarity seems to resolve itself into a reminiscence of one of Mr. Surtees's sporting novels, where the arrival of an A.D.C. at a watering-place causes a social flutter until it is discovered that he is an Assistant Drainage Commissioner.

I therefore retire from a conflict for which I am so imperfectly equipped, and concede my critic's proposition that "well-groomed" involves a well-brushed head as well as a well-cut coat and well-creased trousers and well-varnished boots. I turn from the abstract to the concrete, and ask myself and my wife whether we can lay our finger on a well-groomed man in Stuccovia. My wife replies, a little inconsequently, "Well, I always think Mr. Soulsby looks very nice." And certainly he is effective in church. His beard is fair and neatly trimmed. His hair is parted in the

middle. Pomatum adds its artful aid, and trains his hyacinthine locks over a thoughtful brow. He wears an embroidered stole, red or white, green or violet, as the season indicates. His surplice is very short, his cassock very long, and made of purple silk as a memorial of Queen Victoria's second Jubilee—a piece of symbolism, not on the face of it obvious, which he borrowed from the Savoy Chapel, but which might have proceeded from the Savoy Theatre. Yes, I think Mr. Soulsby is "well groomed," though I certainly should not call him well dressed.

It is sometimes easiest to illustrate one's meaning by negative examples; and our excellent M.P., Mr. Barrington-Bounderley, whom I have just met in Stucco Gardens, is neither well dressed nor even well groomed. He wears a turned-down collar of the new type, much too high for his short neck, and a red tie in a sailor's knot. He has celebrated the return of spring by putting on a white waistcoat and brown boots; but, as the air is still chilly, he wears a greatcoat with a fur collar, and thick trousers of a conspicuous check. I protest that I would

rather be apparelled like our curate, young Bumpstead, whom I saw returning from his Easter Monday trip in a college "blazer," a Roman collar, grey knickerbockers, and a straw hat.

The mention of Easter reminds me that before these poor words see the light May will be upon us. Ere long the asparagus will wave its feathery branches, and the voice of the plover will be heard in the land. To the jaded Londoner these symptoms of returning summer mean more, far more, than the dog-rose in the hedgerow, and the first note of the nightingale in the copse. *Nunc formosissimus annus.* Let us rise betimes, and go forth to taste the freshness of the dawn.

"Those who know Bond Street only in the blaze of fashionable hours can form but an imperfect conception of its matutinal charm when it is still shady and fresh; when there are no carriages, rarely a cart, and passers-by gliding about on real business. One feels as in some continental city. Then there are time and opportunity to look at the shops; and there is no street in the world that can fur-

nish such a collection, filled with so many objects of beauty, curiosity, and interest. The jewellers and goldsmiths and dealers in rare furniture—porcelain, and cabinets, and French pictures—have long fixed upon Bond Street as their favourite quarter, and are not chary of displaying their treasures; though it may be a question whether some of the magazines of fancy food—delicacies culled from all the climes and regions of the globe—may not, in their picturesque variety, be the most attractive. The palm, perhaps, would be given to the fishmongers, with their exuberant exhibitions, grouped with skill, startling often with strange forms, dazzling with prismatic tints, and breathing the invigorating redolence of the sea."

Those last words are remarkable. Lord Beaconsfield, who wrote them, was probably the only human being who ever enjoyed the smell of a fishmonger's shop on a summer morning; and yet in some sense and degree I share his rapture. I love that smell, not for what it is, but for what it implies. The opulent profusion of the shop says that the austerity of

March is over. "Salmon is y-comen in." Lent lies behind us, and "High Tea" no longer slays its thousands. My wife is Ritualistic; and, in spite of her personal devotion to Mr. Soulsby, she sometimes craves for more substantial fare than is provided at St. Ursula's. All through the autumn and winter—

> "Like cats in air-pumps, to subsist we strive
> On joys too thin to keep the soul alive."

But when Lent begins, my wife and her unmarried sister, who stays a good deal with us, long, like Chaucer's folk, to go on pilgrimages: and pilgrimages are fatally inconsistent with dinner. The experience of more Lents than I care to enumerate has made me quick to recognize the earliest signs of this anti-prandial pietism. It begins like this, after Choral Mattins on Sunday. "It is a pity you weren't in church this morning. Mr. Soulsby was quite at his best. He preached on Street-Music and Morals, showing how the one affects the other. It was so like him—wonderfully suggestive and all that. Still I feel in Lent that one wants something a little more dogmatic, and so does Bertha. So, if you don't mind very much, I think we will have

High Tea on Fridays till Easter, and go to some really good church afterwards. This will not interfere with Mr. Soulsby's Wednesday lectures."

Thus the temptress. Man, weak man, yields to the fatal suggestion; and for six successive Fridays his evening meal consists of tea-cake, honey, sardines, and potted shrimps, "washed down," as Pennialinus would say, "with copious draughts" of beverages which neither inebriate nor cheer. These vindictive viands despatched, we sally forth in a four-wheeler, my wife and her sister on the front seat and I with my back to the horse. Patient seekers after truth, we bump uncomplainingly through frost and fog to the Holy Places of orthodoxy. One night we rub shoulders with Duchesses at St. Barnabas, Pimlico; another, we are pelted with Holborn mud by the gutter-children of St. Alban's. On all alike we come back cold and cross and tired and dyspeptic, but sustained by the consciousness that we are "keeping Lent." Well, it is over now, and words fail to express the thankfulness with which I return to the easy-going attractions of the Church-round-the

Corner, even though qualified by Mr. Soulsby's unctuous rhetoric, and the ill-timed jocularity of "Blazer" Bumpstead.

But my happiness in the return of summer is this year not quite unalloyed. There is a fly in the ointment. At the best of times I am not as well off as I should like to be, or as I feel that I ought to be. Fortunately, we have no family, save in so far as my wife's brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces, fill that aching void. Stuccovia, though even excruciatingly genteel, is an inexpensive quarter; and, by the habitual practice of a scrupulous economy, we have hitherto maintained a decorous appearance. We are not, indeed, "carriage-people," as the phrase runs in Stuccovian circles; but our door is opened by a dingy retainer in a well-worn dress suit, who somehow reminds one of a visit to the dentist's. I belong to two clubs. My wife is always correctly, if not becomingly, dressed, and the head of my family sends us every summer a haunch of venison, which imparts something of a feudal air to our modest mode of entertaining.

But this year these glories of our birth and

state are threatened with eclipse. Whatever else happens, the Income Tax must go up, and, "what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation"—I wish to goodness I could add with Burke, "and that fall." When the Tories cut down Prince Albert's proposed annuity from £50,000 a year to £30,000, he remarked, with admirable philosophy, that he must reduce his subscriptions. So must we; and, fortunately, at St. Ursula's the secretive almsbag has long superseded the too patent plate. But, where you give very little to begin with, the most lavish reductions will not secure opulence. My wife is always so excellent a manager of her clothes that it is very difficult to save more in that department than she saves already. She will go to the next garden-party at Fulham (supposing the new bishop gives one) by Underground train, instead of chartering a victoria for the afternoon. I shall wear my grey frock-coat a third season, instead of giving it to the dingy retainer; and, when the annual haunch comes from Proudflesh Park, we shall make the fishmonger take it in payment of his account. Still, in spite of all these economical

devices, we feel that our financial year is only too likely to close in gloom; and, though we yield to none in patriotism, we are beginning to ask in the privacy of the domestic alcove whether the war is quite worth the domiciliary discomfort which it entails. The doubt had often presented itself to my mind, but, being properly sensitive to public opinion, I had never suffered it to rise to my lips, until I was emboldened by the frankness of the *Saturday Review*. Here is a journal both patriotic and genteel, and, after commenting on the fact that the cost of the war will probably be five times that of the Crimean campaign and nearly a third of the debt incurred in the great struggle with Napoleon, it goes on to say: "It is too late now to ask whether South Africa is, commercially or morally, worth this gigantic outlay. Time alone can show whether or not we have again put our money on the wrong horse."

Deeply moved by this painful suggestion, I bought a copy of the *Saturday*, and read it to my wife after tea. She shed tears of vexation; for, at the earlier stages of the war, she had been even exuberantly patriotic and bellicose. She

scraped acquaintance with a trooper in "Paget's Horse," who came in khaki to dine with us and borrowed five pounds of me to pay his lodging in Lower Stucco Place. When the eldest son of the head of my family went out with his regiment, she sent him as a farewell present a field-glass and the musical edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern;* which he was good enough to retain though too busy to acknowledge. Framed photographs of Lord Roberts and Sir Redvers Buller faced one another on our drawing-room chimney-piece; and, when Ladysmith was relieved, a Union Jack upside down was displayed in every window of our house from attic to kitchen.

And after all this outlay of money and emotion, with the certainty of diminished income and the resulting curtailment of all that a well-constituted female holds dear, to be told that perhaps after all South Africa was "the wrong horse," was more than feminine flesh and blood, already overwrought, could patiently endure. Happily my dear wife's religious principles are more securely fixed than those of Mrs. Jarley, or else her wrath might have found a similar

expression. "'I am a'most inclined,' said Mrs. Jarley, bursting with the fulness of her anger, and the weakness of her means of revenge, 'to turn atheist when I think of it.'"

My wife's vexation finds its vent, not in renouncing her religion, but in denouncing her relations. When financial troubles vex the calm sea of our domestic life, I am only too familiar with biting references to an ill-starred investment in the "Cosmopolitan Æsthetic Syndicate," which was established (with a paid-up capital of £500) to supply Europe and America with plush photograph frames and peacock fans. "I always told you you were a perfect goose for letting yourself be wheedled by that vulgar American, simply because he asked you to dine at the Cecil. I don't believe you would have done it if it hadn't been after dinner. Just think how convenient that hundred pounds would have been just now, with this horrid addition to the income-tax and everything going up. And, if you must go and fling your money away, you might at least try to make a little, instead of living in perfect idleness. If you can't do any-

thing else, one would think you might write for the newspapers."

Of this just but not generous discourse, only the exordium had been uttered when my sister-in-law opportunely entered the room, and diverted the stream of indignant eloquence from me to herself. "How very tiresome of you, Bertha, to be so late! The tea is stone-cold, and Muggins is as cross as the tongs already, because he had to bring up more hot water for Robert. It's no good saying you've been to your District, and didn't see how the time was going. I know perfectly well what that means. You have been gossiping at Mrs. Soulsby's, and walking home with that odious Mr. Bumpstead. I really think he is the worst-mannered young man I ever knew. I hear him joking with Muggins as he comes upstairs, and he generally upsets a screen, and always disarranges the anti-macassars. And as to his caring so much about the poor people and the schools, it's all stuff. He is much more interested in the *Sporting Life*, and I believe you know he is, only, for some extraordinary reason, you always think it necessary to stand up for him." By this

time my wife's face is unbecomingly heated, and my sister-in-law is on the verge of tears. So I seize the *Saturday* which has caused such woe, and go off to read, and smoke a cigarette, in that dark cupboard with its uninterrupted view of the backyard which is facetiously called my "study."

V

Carp of Brasenose must be getting on in life. We all know that he was a correspondent of the Rev. Edward Casaubon, who numbered him among the *viros nullo ævo perituros;* and that carries one a good way back. But his eye for a blunder in a friend's writing has not waxed dim, nor has his natural force of disagreeableness abated. He writes in a rather tremulous hand to point out what he imagines to be an inconsistency between two items of autobiography which have occurred in the pages of this Log-Book.

In introducing myself to the notice of my readers, I said that I was "a feeble unit of the Great Middle Class." In describing my present unfamiliarity with smart society, I thought it due to myself to premise that I was "exceedingly well born." Now, the fact that Carp thinks he has detected a fatal incon-

sistency between these two statements only illustrates once again the limitations of the learned. A man whose whole life has been divided between the Common Room of Brasenose and a villa in the Bradmore Road knows nothing of our social vicissitudes. In his well-ordered scheme of life there is no room for decline and fall. It does not begin very high, but then, on the other hand, it ends pretty much where it began. Very different is the lot of those who, being by birth connected with the territorial caste, have been submerged by the Great Middle Class, and swallowed up by the "dim, common populations" of Suburbia or Stuccovia. For Carp's instruction, and for the vindication of my own accuracy, I must describe the process, painful though such retrospections must always be.

I was born and bred in Loamshire, a county undisturbed by commerce and manufacture, unviolated by smoke and steam. One exiguous and dilatory line meanders through its fat green meadows. In the streets of its chief town one can hear, as well as see, the grass grow. Its inhabitants are to an abnormal

degree industrious, orderly, contented, and well-behaved.

> "They eat, they drink, they sleep, they plod,
> They go to church on Sunday ;
> And many are afraid of God,
> And more of Mrs. Grundy."

The county contains no Duke of Omnium or Lord Steyne—no transcendent and all-absorbing potentate. Our Lord Lieutenant, indeed, is a peer, of ancient creation but of diminished income, who, surrounded by a large family of plain daughters, lives in a dilapidated castle, and lets his shooting. But, on the whole, we don't think much of peers. Squires, of course, are common to all counties; but Loamshire is pre-eminently the land of Baronets. They are dotted all over the county, like knots in a network—comfortable men, a little pompous; with incomes ranging from ten thousand a year in good times to five in bad; living in substantial houses of dark-red brick with facings of white stone, set in what they call parks, and their detractors meadow-land. Of this goodly company the head of my family is the acknowledged chief. His creation dates from James I., and

Proudflesh Park is really a deer-park, marked as such in Mr. Evelyn Philip Shirley's classical work on the subject—not merely a park with deer in it, which, as my kinsman will tell you, is a very different and a very inferior thing.

What need to say that in a neighbourhood thus populated and thus influenced, the time-honoured distinction between "The Town" and "The County" survives in all its vigour? In vain did the Banker and the Brewer accumulate large fortunes, and subscribe handsomely to the Loamshire Hounds. The County would not ask them to dinner. In vain did the Solicitor build himself a French *château* a hundred yards off the highroad, and give tennis-parties in a dusty garden. The Baronets and their belongings held aloof, and the clergy, though they attended the parties, apologized to their squires for doing so. This being the social order of Loamshire, and myself a cadet of the family which has its habitation at Proudflesh Park, I may really say that I was born in the purple—or at least in a highly respectable mauve. When I was three-and-twenty, I was considered in the county a very lucky young man. I had just left Oxford, with

the blushing honours of a Third in Law thick upon me. I had a genteel independence bequeathed by an aunt, and only one life (reported to be scrofulous) stood between me and the Baronetcy. Thus stimulated, I plunged into the feverish dissipations of County society, tempting matrimonial fate more recklessly than I knew.

> "Alas! regardless of their doom
> The little victims play;
> No sense have they of ills to come,
> Nor care beyond to-day:
> Yet see how all around them wait
> The ministers of human fate!"

I behaved like the rest of my kind, and in my case the minister of human fate was Mrs. Topham-Sawyer. I encountered my destiny at the Loamshire Hunt Ball.

Selina Topham-Sawyer was then (though I say it) an uncommonly pretty girl; but she was one of many sisters, and Mrs. Topham-Sawyer was not the woman to give away a chance. Hushed in grim repose, she expected her evening prey, and she was not disappointed of it. I danced four times with Selina; took her to supper and "sate out." What I said

I have never been able to recall with precision, but Selina says that I proposed, and she ought to know. Anyhow, before we left the ball-room I had the happiness of overhearing Mrs. Topham-Sawyer announce her daughter's engagement to a group of buzzing neighbours. "It has really been quite an infatuation with him, and he has carried his point by sheer persistency. You know it is not exactly what we could have wished for our dear girl; but he is really a well-principled young man; and of course he is quite one of ourselves, and that always makes things so much easier. No—nothing much in the way of money. But I believe Mr. Topham-Sawyer is satisfied, and of course Selina's happiness is the first object."

I hope I am not ungrateful when I say that I have always dated my social decline from that eventful night. My modest fortune, which had sufficed easily enough for a bachelor moving from house to house in hospitable Loamshire, began to shrink uncomfortably when compressed by Marriage Settlements. As I had been called to the Bar, and had no definite occupation in the county, Selina's parents

insisted that we must settle in London, "so that Robert may be near his work" — that mirage of employment and opulence which we always seemed to be nearing, and never reached. My wife being a Topham-Sawyer and thereby, as every one knows, related to the Harley-Bakers, the Welbecks, and the Hornby-Maddoxes, would have liked a more central situation; but our trustees insisted on our buying a house in the newly developed district of Stuccovia; and a plausible house-agent persuaded us that the Star of Fashion, moving westward, would soon shed its lustre over Stucco Square. Well—we have now lived there a good many years, and that desired luminary has not yet made its appearance. Meanwhile my chances of succeeding to the Baronetcy and the splendours of Proudflesh Park become each year more remote. The intervening life, once fondly believed to be unsound, has proved to be not only durable but pre-eminently productive, and a numerous progeny of superfluous cousins now interposes itself between me and the fulfilment of my early dreams.

When first we settled in Stucco Square, Selina and I clung desperately to the traditions in which we had been reared. We remembered, in season and out of season, that we belonged to "The County," and we strained every nerve to retain our territorial connexions. But gradually the dismal truth was borne in upon us that "The County" stood for very little in the social economy of London. The magnates of Loamshire are but sparing and infrequent cultivators of the town. Three or four of our Baronets, indeed, take furnished houses in South Kensington for two months after Easter, and our Lord Lieutenant generally comes up for the opening of Parliament to a sepulchral mansion, on the other side of Oxford Street, which has not been re-papered since the days of his great-grandfather. An annual dinner in Bryanston Square, a Sunday luncheon in Cromwell Road, and three tea-parties in Stanhope Gardens represent the sum-total of the hospitality which we receive from "The County." And by degrees we began to realize that it would be easier, wiser, and perhaps more profitable to accommodate our-

selves to our environment. It was the beginning of a new life. The first cousin of a Baronet and the daughter of Mrs. Topham-Sawyer cannot forget that they have had elsewhere their setting, and come from afar. But we have learned that, the less we talk about Loamshire, the better our friends are pleased, and we have ceased to trail our clouds of territorial glory before the disgusted eyes of our Stuccovian neighbours. In fine, we have become merged in the Great Middle Class. We cultivate the friendliest relations with the Soulsbys and the Barrington-Bounderleys, and we are fain to admit that the Cashingtons give the best dinners in Stuccovia. But, though our associations are no longer in the least degree aristocratic, we flatter ourselves that we still are fashionable; and as "the high Midsummer pomps come on," we scan the journals of fashion with absorbing eagerness for social openings. This year it is rather a hopeless quest. One morning, early in May, I observed that Selina was more than usually absorbed in the perusal of her favourite newspaper—*Classy Cuttings*. It is a pleasant print,

and I have often derived entertainment from its Answers to Correspondents.

PUSSY.—We hardly know how to advise you about your ormolu wedding-presents. Perhaps, grouped together on one table, they might be useful as an effect of colour.

GIRLIE.—If you are blonde, your five o'clock tea-service should be blue; if brunette, pink.

ANXIOUS HOSTESS.—It is not necessary to offer cold meat with five o'clock tea, unless you are entertaining Royalty.

TO COLLECTORS.—A lady, having artificial teeth to dispose of, would exchange them for paste shoe-buckles. No reasonable offer refused.

But Selina is intolerant of frivolity, and I could see with half-averted eye that her reading displeased her. Before long she broke out in a high and rather querulous tone, "Listen to this, Bertha."

"The fiat has gone forth that there are to be no Drawing-rooms or Levees this year, and, furthermore, though this has not been publicly announced, the much-talked-of Court for the reception of the Diplomatic Corps and the

higher official world will not be held either. The King has evidently every intention that the mourning shall not be interrupted for six months at least. It is also now clearly understood for the first time that no official parties will be given. The Cabinet Ministers have had a direct intimation from the King that such is his desire, and no doubt they are more than ready to accept a decree which will save them much trouble and expense. Dinner-parties, however, do not come under the ban. Mr. Balfour is giving a series of dinners, and there have been several at Lansdowne House."

Bertha and I sighed and looked grave, but it was the merest hypocrisy; and Bertha, who, in spite of her sex, has some sense of the ludicrous, shared my silent amusement at Selina's assumed distress. The fiat announced in *Classy Cuttings* has not the remotest bearing on our happiness or gaiety. Of course Selina was presented on her marriage by the wife of the head of my family, and for several years she toiled dutifully to the Drawing-room. But we were never asked to the Balls or the Concerts, nor even to the Garden-Parties at Marl-

borough House; so her enthusiasm for courtly pageants has declined, and she has no more notion of ordering herself a new train than a diamond tiara. As to the Levee, what the tailor euphemistically calls the lower part of my chest has undergone a considerable development since I have lived in London, and my uniform as a D.L. of Loamshire would now be a world too narrow. In a "Court for the reception of the Diplomatic Corps and the Higher Official World" we should obviously have no place. Mr. Balfour is not in the habit of asking us to dinner; and the only occasion on which we ever saw the inside of Lansdowne House was a charity bazaar. So on the whole the proclamation of *Classy Cuttings* left us pretty much where it found us; but we thought it decorous to look disappointed; and we set about searching for social joys to take the place of those which were denied to us.

The Private View of the Academy is always a great event in the life of Stuccovia, and this year we had a special interest in it, for the exhibition contained a portrait of our M.P., Mr. Barrington-Bounderley, subscribed for by his

political admirers, and destined to adorn the Constitutional Club of our district. Somehow the subscriptions ran short, for Stuccovia is not a giving neighbourhood, and the commission was entrusted to a broken-down kinsman of the Soulsbys, who had known better days, as the phrase is, and had learnt his art in that "Gentlemanly" school which Miss Braddon has so feelingly described.

"You put a crimson curtain behind your subject, and you put a bran-new hat or a roll of paper in his right hand, and you thrust his left hand in his waistcoat—the best black satin, with a strong light in the texture—and you made your subject look like a gentleman. Yes, if he was a chimney-sweep when he went into your studio, he went out of it a gentleman. But nowadays a gentlemanly portrait of a county member, with a Corinthian pillar and a crimson curtain, gets no more attention than a bishop's half-length of black canvas."

Whether the artist succeeded in making Joe Bounderley look like a gentleman is a point on which I reserve my opinion, for I know that, if I expressed it, Selina would say "That is

simply jealousy, because Mr. Bounderley looks so much younger than you."

But Art for Art's sake, as the critics say, does not really interest Stuccovia; and what we honestly enjoy is a little local excitement. This has lately been supplied in two very unexpected forms. St. Ursula's has never been considered Ritualistic. Mr. Soulsby, as I have said before, avows himself of the "Deep Church"; is a loyal upholder of episcopal authority, and cultivates the goodwill of all dignitaries, both in Church and State. Still, he prides himself on moving with the movement of the time; and I fancy that he is not wholly insensible to the pressure brought to bear upon him by my Ritualistic wife and sister-in-law, and other parochial ladies who sympathize and symbolize with them. Be this as it may, he has lately introduced some ceremonial developments, and these have produced the very unexpected result of a visit and lecture from the Wickliffe Preachers. That I may not misrepresent the tone and tactics of these eminent religionists, I transcribe the report of their proceedings in Stuccovia from a theological magazine:—

"The subject of 'The Roman Mass in the English Church' was dealt with by Mr. Kensit, junior, in the Athenæum Hall. There was a large and crowded audience, including a section of Ritualists, who made matters somewhat unpleasant by the diffusion of obnoxious-smelling chemicals, but the audience endured it all, and it served to put vigour and life into the apathetic ones. In illustration of the lecture the priest's vestments, together with his incense, sacring bell, and wafers, were exhibited, and it formed a capital object-lesson."

That the object-lesson should have elicited no more formidable protests than "obnoxious-smelling chemicals" speaks well for the long-suffering of St. Ursula's Parish; and, as "Blazer" Bumpstead was seen prowling about the entrance hall, the avoidance of a physical contest seems little less than miraculous. But indeed an almost sickly tolerance of opinions the most divergent from our own has of late begun to infect the atmosphere of Stuccovia.

It surely is a parlous sign of the times when, in a district so eminently genteel and patriotic as ours, it is found possible to hold a Pro-Boer

Meeting. A year ago, strong in our righteous cause and our superior numbers, we should have broken the head of a South African delegate as heartily as the bravest citizens of Scarborough, or the merriest Medical Students in Trafalgar Square. The choirmen of St. Ursula's would have stood shoulder to shoulder with the strappers from the livery-yard, and I shrewedly suspect that "Blazer" Bumpstead would have organized the fray. To-day the meeting is held in the lecture-room of the Parochial Club. Mr. Soulsby presides; and Mr. Bounderley sends a letter imploring his friends to give the speaker a fair hearing. Mr. Soulsby, turning to scorn with lips divine the falsehood of extremes, mellifluously enunciates the doctrine that there are probably at least two sides to almost every question; and, without wishing to commit himself or to prejudge, he hails the "League of Liberals for the Disintegration of the Empire" as being, in the Baconian sense, a light-bearing institution. Under the auspices of the League to-night's meeting is held. Let us listen, if not with agreement at least with sympathy and respect,

to the eminent Batavian who has come to plead the cause of his brethren in the South African Republics.

And then we launch out on a shoreless sea of humanitarian eloquence which I do not intend to iterate. My wife, who is true to the political traditions of her family, is inclined to denounce the whole affair as "Stuff." Wreathed in primroses, she accompanied Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley to the Albert Hall on May 8. She knows that the Boers are horrid people, who do not wash, and who sleep six in a bed. On the other hand, she once danced with Sir Alfred Milner when he was a Scholar of Balliol, and not long ago she sate two off Mr. Chamberlain at a dinner-party at the Cashingtons'. So all her sympathies are on the right side; but I can see breakers ahead which threaten my domestic peace. Bertha, who is always the slave of the last word, has taken to reading *The Commonwealth*. She has conceived a vehement dislike of Capitalists, and is persuaded that, if social order is ever to be restored in South Africa, the task must be entrusted to the Christian Social Union. So she waves

her tear-dewed handkerchief, and applauds the Batavian's rhetoric; while Bumpstead, whom I should have taken for a True Blue Englishman and a wholesome Tory, sits in her pocket and echoes her applause. What I see Selina also sees. I catch her eye, and tremble for the future.

VI

THE flatness and unprofitableness of the present season are sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that my Log-Book for the month of June contains nothing more momentous than the Dedication Festival of St. Ursula's, Stucco Gardens. Socially, there has been even less than usual to record. Stuccovia, following the decisive example of Belgravia, has abstained from giving dances; and this, though it is hard on Bertha, has been borne with equanimity by Selina and myselt. A laudable desire to counteract the extortions of the income-tax has suspended dinner-parties, and Selina and I have had several serious discussions as to the most advantageous way of disposing of the expected haunch from Proudflesh Park. There is much to be said for making the fishmonger take it in part payment of his account; but, on the other hand, to present it to the Bounderleys

would be a cheap and effective mode of repaying accumulated civilities. On the whole, we have agreed to defer our decision till the haunch actually arrives; for the benevolence of one's richer relations is uncertain, and Loamshire has this year shown a tendency to fail us. Our Baronets, seeing no matrimonial openings for their daughters in this clouded and abnormal season, have practised a wise economy, and have remained at home. The head of my family, indeed, came up for the Derby, but he left his wife in the country, and it did not seem to occur to him that he might have entertained us at Claridge's, where he puts up. Selina encountered her sister-in-law, the reigning Mrs. Topham-Sawyer (for my revered mother-in-law is, alas! a dowager) at the Military Exhibition; but Mrs. T.-S. was at pains to explain that she had only come up for two nights, and was going back to Loamshire next day. So we feel that we are deserted alike by London and by The County. Whatever may have been the case in former years, the world is certainly not too much with us in 1901; and, like the repentant peeresses in Tractarian tales, we turn

for consolation to the Church. Hence the unusual interest which has this year been evoked by the Dedication Festival of St. Ursula's. And here let me pay a merited tribute to the ingenuity of Mr. Soulsby. The distinguishing gift of the "Deep Church" is a singular faculty by which it discerns Meaning in the apparently Insignificant, and evokes the Unexpected from the inmost recesses of the Commonplace. With this high gift Mr. Soulsby has been richly dowered. St. Ursula's was built in 1861, and for twenty years pursued an uneventful course. But then came what is called a "quickening of Church Life." Services were multiplied, ornaments introduced. St. Ursula's Parish Magazine was started. A Church Guild ("The Fishers in Deep Waters") was organized. The Dedication Festival began to be observed. Ours is a shifting population, and no one in the parish could remember the Dedication, except Lady Farringford who regards church-going as an expensive form of lunacy, and a broken-down sexton who was dismissed for tampering with the poor-box. But the quickened Church Life threw itself enthusiastically into the work

of commemorating what it could not remember, and year by year, about the middle of June, Selina and Mrs. Soulsby and Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley and their friends have lashed themselves into a fury of church-going and sermon-hearing, which the attractions of Hurlingham were unable to countervail, and from which even the Oxford and Cambridge Match was barely able to distract them. All this was well enough in ordinary times, but this year it was felt that something a little more striking was required, if only by way of foil to the social dulness of the season. It was then that the Deep Church came to our assistance, and Mr. Soulsby saw, as in a trance, the spiritual significance of a Fortieth Anniversary.

A man of more ordinary mind might have been content to defer the great parochial celebration until 1911, when St. Ursula's will be fifty years old. But not so Lancelot Ludovic Soulsby. He lives in daily hope of what is pietistically termed a call to a sphere of wider influence, or a more exposed situation in the Church's battlefield. Besides, the celebration

of a fiftieth anniversary had become commonplace. Everybody and everything, from Queen Victoria downward, had kept a Jubilee. The labours of a thousand preachers and ten thousand leader-writers had tabulated and moralized the happenings of half a century. But no one as yet had celebrated the Fortieth Anniversary of anything; and here was an unexplored field of Significance ready to Mr. Soulsby's hand. I am not privileged (as Pennialinus says) to repair unbidden to Mr. Soulsby's study, or to penetrate into that more mysterious alcove where he receives his parochial inspiration from her whom he playfully calls his dear Egeria. But I am persuaded that one fine day Mrs. Soulsby said, "What with the war funds, and what with the income-tax, the parish charities are running very low this year. I wish we could make a little extra effort at the Dedication Festival." And Mr. Soulsby instantly replied, "Go to. Let us proclaim a Parochial *Quadragesima*." With a man of this type to conceive a great thought is to embody it in action; and he forthwith betook himself to the lively oracles

of Alexander Cruden and disturbed the long repose of Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible.* The result of this research was promulgated to the parish in a sermon on the following Sunday, which was reproduced in the next issue of the Parish Magazine.

"It will not have escaped your notice, dear friends, that this summer witnesses the Fortieth Anniversary of the dedication of our beloved St. Ursula's. We propose to mark the event by something of special effort, endeavouring by outward token and visible act to impress alike upon the heart and the intelligence of the truth-seeking souls who resort hitherward the little observed but most pregnant significance of the great numeral 40.

"It is a beautiful characteristic of numbers generally that they are 'representative rather than determinate.'[1] The learned tell us that this idea of representative numbers, so full of possible significations, so splendidly antipathetic to the dismal literalness of Cocker and Colenso, is extremely common among Eastern nations, 'who have a prejudice against counting their

[1] See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible,* Art. *Numbers.*

possessions accurately.' It enters largely into ancient systems of chronology, and it is found in the philosophical and metaphysical speculations not only of the Pythagorean and other ancient schools of philosophy, both Greek and Roman, but also in the later Jewish teachers, the Gnostics, and the great Augustine himself. Those who look below the surface of what they read into the hidden depths of what the author intended will be at no loss to recall instances of numbers used representatively, or (as has been beautifully said by an exegetical writer) 'preferentially, because some meaning, which we do not in all cases understand, was attached to them.' It were superfluous to dwell on the more familiar instances of Ten (which means little) and Seven (which means less), or the result of multiplying the one by the other, which means anything you please. Let it suffice this morning, when we are looking forward with chastened joy to the celebration of our great Parochial *Quadragesima*, to dwell for a moment upon the crowning mystery of Forty.

"It is the special and most endearing charm of this precious numeral that, strictly construed,

literally interpreted, it means nothing in particular. What, asks the man of the world, is 40 but twice 20? What, murmurs the Church, except XXXIX. *plus* I.? But to eyes that are spiritually opened, to ears that are properly attuned, all this nicely-calculated less or more is the merest sciolism of an unawakened sense.

"No, my friends, the significance of 40 is not arithmetical but psychical. Through all literature, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, that significance runs like a silver thread. In the opulent exuberance of oriental fancy, it stands for the infinite possibilities of moral fall; and each of the Forty Thieves, could he but speak, has his separate word of warning for these perilous times. In the mordant verse of Thackeray, it is the token of ripe manhood and experienced judgment. 'Once you have come to Forty year,' the errors of immaturity should be no longer yours. In the racy proverbialism of our dear native tongue, she who is fair, fat, and Forty, is the perfected type of the eternal feminine. In the triumphant football chaunt of the soaring human boy, 'Forty

years on' adumbrates the impending advent of the Golden Age."

At this point Mr. Soulsby began to soar into sacred symbolism, illustrating his theme by the experiences of Moses and Elijah, and here it might be indecorous for the mere layman to follow him. The sermon as reproduced in the magazine runs to twenty pages; but I have cited enough to indicate the spirit in which this year we approached our Dedication Festival. The mystic numeral was everything and everywhere. Forty (or, as Mr. Soulsby preferred to say, twice twenty) clergymen walked in the procession; Forty instruments, wind and stringed, enriched the orchestra. Five services a day during the octave produced a total of Forty. The 4th, 40th, and 400th hymns in "Ancient and Modern" were sung without reference to sense or subject. Archdeacon Bunker blessed Forty new hassocks (a thank-offering from Mr. and Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley), and pew-rents were attached to Forty sittings hitherto free (a thank-offering to Mr. and Mrs. Soulsby).

The principal sermon on the Sunday in the

Octave of the Dedication was preached by my old Oxford friend, Jawkins, of Magdalen. Jawkins was always a very good fellow—on pleasant terms with himself and the world—fond of popularity and the milder forms of athletic exercise; averse from mental exertion and the drudgery of the Schools, but quite sufficiently sharp to know the right thing to say about everything, and ready to enounce it, with a terrible copiousness of words, at the Union or elsewhere. But withal a genial soul, living an easy and rather jovial life, spending his money freely, and by no means averse to the modest tankard and the pipe of peace. He had, with other small accomplishments, a passable knack of rhyming; and his valedictory address to his scout was a good deal quoted at the time—

"To-night I bade good-bye to Smith : he went, and left behind
His good old rooms, those dear old rooms, where oft I sweetly dined ;
There's a new year coming up, Filcher, but I shall never see
The Freshman's solid breakfast or the Freshman's heavy tea.

Upon this battered table, and within these rooms of mine,
In the early, early morning, there'll be many a festive shine,
And the Dean will come and comment on 'the most unseemly noise,'
Saying, 'Gentlemen, remember, pray, you're now no longer boys.'

When the men come up again, Filcher, and the term is at its height,
You'll never see me more in these long gay rooms at night;
When the old dry wines are circling, and the claret-cup flows cool,
And the loo is fast and furious, with a fiver in the pool."

Jawkins and I had always been good friends, but we belonged to different colleges, and there was not between us that intimacy which survives separation. So, when we had taken our modest degrees, we went our several ways —I to the Bar and marriage, and Jawkins to Holy Orders. After he had "entered the Church," as pressmen say, I used to hear of him from time to time as a popular curate at a southern watering-place, and as having won prizes at lawn-tennis tournaments.

Then I heard of him established in a Family Living, and devoting his mind to the culture of carnations. "Poor man! He has taken to gardening," said the late Dr. Vaughan of a clerical brother at Doncaster, in the tone one usually reserves for a friend who has taken to drinking. But carnations could not satisfy the ardent soul of Jim Jawkins; and, having lost sight of him for several years, I lately began to hear strange things of my former friend. He had given up horticulture and had taken to reading. In his undergraduate days he had been a bit of a Ritualist, and on Sunday evenings was often to be found at St. Barnabas, if he was not dining at the Mitre. But now I heard that he had begun to talk mysteriously of the Higher Criticism; and the suspicion that he knew some German, combined with the certainty that he knew no Greek, had aroused the antagonism of the clerical circle in which he moved. The down-grade once touched, his descent was rapid. He published a small volume of unintelligible sermons, and dedicated it to Bishop Westcott—the sort of book, as Dr. Liddon said, which "a Little Fog

writes and dedicates to the Great Fog." Dogma, as requiring accurate knowledge and clear thinking, was alien to his temperament; but on history—or, as he preferred to call it, Philosophy teaching by Example, he was exceptionally great. His address to a Mothers' Meeting on the "Social Ideals of Thomas à Becket" had a deserved renown; and, when he launched his passionate argument beginning "But you will tell me that Becket failed at Clarendon," not a charwoman in the room but cast down her convicted eyes; not a laundress who did not quiver before the impending refutation.

Well, here was a preacher after Mr. Soulsby's own heart; and the Dedication Festival of St. Ursula's was an occasion worthy of the preacher. As he warmed to his theme, Jawkins's familiar fluency became torrential. He protested that of all the joys of the Church's year—the full-blooded revelries of Boxing Day, the mellow glories of the Harvest Home—none were equal to the pure rapture of a Dedication Festival; and no Dedication Festival was so attractive, so imposing, as St. Ursula's. That

night he went back in memory to dear old days long gone by, when he and their Vicar—then two ardent and aspiring lads—had joined hand and heart in the resolve that before they died they would do something to win the soul of Christian England to a due recognition of St. Ursula, and of all that she stood for in the blood-stained annals of the Church's long crusade. And I am persuaded that for the moment he believed all this—for Jim Jawkins is an honest fellow—though as a matter of fact he had never set eyes on Soulsby till they met last year at one of Archdeacon Wilberforce's famous Convocation-luncheons.

A personal reminiscence of that kind always tells. The effect was instantaneous. The very choir-boys surceased from sucking peppermint and pinching one another's legs. Selina and Bertha shed tears; and the People's Churchwarden, though a pork-butcher, was sensibly affected. A "veritable Pactolus" of copper, varied by two half-sovereigns and a five-shilling piece, flowed into the almsbags; and we sang the 400th hymn with indescribable emotion.

Rising to the spirit of the occasion, Selina

had invited Jawkins to supper after the service, and had asked a few of our more ecclesiastically-minded friends to meet him. The Soulsbys were a matter of course, but I confess that I was surprised when I heard young Bumpstead's guffaw on the stairs, and rather wondered whether our modest preparations would prove quite adequate to the demands of his extremely healthy appetite. Selina has a just objection to Sunday cooking, and so arranges our meals on the sacred day that the cook may attend Evensong or walk with the policeman, according as her inclination prompts. Our supper was therefore of a chilly and unexhilarating type—sandwiches and salad, Paysandu ox-tongues, and tinned fishes, with some many-coloured combinations of jelly and jam and cake and cream, which our cook, a woman of imperfect education, described on the *menu* as "Cold Sweats." This sort of fare does very well for Soulsby, who at the best of times is no great performer with the knife and fork; and for Jawkins, who thinks a good deal about his health, and feels bound to drink a cup of Bovril in the vestry im-

mediately after preaching. But I could detect a look of ill-concealed disgust on the expressive countenance of young Bumpstead, as he surveyed our elegantly-spread board and thought regretfully of the Sunday sirloin, of which he had neglected to eat a third helping at one o'clock. To me courteously proffering a sound Niersteiner at 13*s.* a dozen, he replied, almost brusquely, that he wasn't a whale at that sort of tipple, but that, if I could let him have a toothful of bitter, it would do him a treat. At ordinary times so ill-mannered a demand would have elicited from my dear Selina one of those acrid sarcasms before which the boldest quails. But now, to my astonishment, she only said: "It is so stupid of you, Robert, not to have beer always in the room; I have told you repeatedly that so many people prefer it to whisky, and I am sure it must be more wholesome than that dreadful hock of yours. Of course you will say that women know nothing about wine; but all I can say is that I finished some which you left a few Sundays ago, and it made me ill for a week."

This unlooked-for rally to the support of

Philistinism left me dumbfoundered; and it was not till several days later that the mystery explained itself. Rummaging in what Selina calls her "boudoir" for the price-list of Harrod's Stores, I came upon a concealed copy of *Burke's Landed Gentry*, which opened of its own accord at the letter B and the name

BUMPSTEAD.

"BUMPSTEAD, John, Esq., J.P., D.L., of Foxholes, Hampshire. Born 1830. Educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford. Married 1870. And has issue (with several daughters) an only surviving son,

"JOHN THOMAS, in Holy Orders, b. 1876."

This, as Mrs. Nickleby said on an historic occasion, came upon me like a flash of fire, and almost froze my blood. Or, if that be too vehement an expression, it is at least true to say that I now perceived a new and unexpected motive in Selina's domestic policy. Dear old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer now resides in the dower-house of The Sawpits; which is indeed the bailiff's cottage, disguised with a portico and

dignified with a greenhouse. Of course she is what the Irish so expressively term "An Encumbrancer," and Selina's eldest brother has been heard not seldom to grumble at the amount of his mother's jointure, out of all proportion, he says, to the income of the estate. But, even so, it barely suffices for the requirements of genteel life in Loamshire, with three weeks at the seaside in the fall of the leaf. It therefore becomes a matter of natural piety for Selina to let one or other of her unmarried sisters occupy our spare room during the season; and lately Bertha has shown an inclination to begin her visits soon after Christmas, and prolong them till we go to Harrogate. An easy benevolence is, if a man is any judge of his own character, my distinguishing quality; and I have done my best to facilitate what I believed to be Selina's designs for her sister's happiness. Stuccovia, though it knows little of the Peerage or the Guards, is not destitute of eligible youth. The Cashingtons have a son in a cavalry regiment, who looks like a picture on the outside of a comic song; and young

Randolph Bounderley (named after a departed statesman) is on the Stock Exchange, wears a Malmaison carnation, and drives himself to the City in a buggy.

Believing that Selina would gladly welcome either of these youths as a brother-in-law, I have shown them impartial civility; have given them dinners at my more expensive club; and, when they dined with us, have substituted *Perrier Jouet* for the despised Niersteiner. Young Bumpstead, on the other hand, I have always thought it safer to keep at arm's length; and thereby have, as I flattered myself, played into the hands of Selina, who was never tired of denouncing him. But it is difficult for man, slow man, to keep pace with the vicissitudes of feminine policy, and Selina's conduct on the occasion of our Sunday supper showed me that I was quite on the wrong tack. After supper, Bumpstead was allowed to smoke on the balcony, while Bertha prattled artlessly of the collection and the Parochial Treat. And later, when Bertha played a Vesper Hymn of Mr. Soulsby's writing, Bumpstead turned over the music for her, and pronounced the performance

"rippin'," without a hint of rebuke from Selina, who normally detests slang. I once knew a lady of the highest Tory opinions who condoned the regicidal conduct of Cromwell when she found that he belonged to the landed classes of Huntingdonshire; and something of this territorial sympathy animates the gentle bosom of my beloved Selina.

VII

As I write, the season is dying, and, before these pages of the Log-Book reach my reader's eye, it will be dead. Fashionable news trickles slowly to Stuccovia: and we have only just discovered that Society has stolen a march on us, and that, while we have been observing the Court mourning with Chinese exactness, Belgravia has been making merry as if nothing particular had happened. We hear of "tiny dances," which are only distinguished from ordinary balls by the circumstance that the invitations are sent out on visiting-cards. The Helots of Park Lane have given concerts which cost a thousand pounds apiece; and the most authoritative dames in the peerage have assembled their brisk and modish crowds at Osterley and Syon. It was really too bad of *Classy Cuttings* to put us on the wrong tack by announcing that the King would allow no

gaieties this season; but, though Bertha is disappointed, Selina and I are secretly thankful. Ball-going is not much in our way, and ball-giving even less. Still, we felt that we ought to do our utmost to compensate the dear girl for her disappointments; and we have honestly striven to find fresh outlets for her social instinct. As a rule, the festivities of a Stuccovian July are bounded by Mrs. Soulsby's garden-party, where we eat ices from Whiteley's and listen to the Brass Band from the Amalgamated Cabdrivers' Orphan Asylum, while the lower orders of the parish rest their elbows on the railing of the Gardens, and assail the guests with flying sarcasms. But this year Mrs. Soulsby, following the example of Lambeth and Fulham, and ignorant of what the Duchess of Northumberland and Lady Jersey intended, proclaimed in the Parish Magazine that her party would not take place; so we were driven further afield. The head of my family is a member of M.C.C., and, as he happens to be fishing in Norway, he was generous enough to give us tickets for the Eton and Harrow match. We made up a

little party from Stuccovia, and Bertha looked very nice in a white frock with a large bunch of cornflowers. Whether it was purely by accident that young Bumpstead turned up on the Saturday just as we sat down to luncheon I will not venture to say; but Selina gave me a meaning look, and I left the cold chicken and lobster salad to their fate. When play was resumed, I found myself sitting close to Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley, and, though I think her son an odious young snob, I could not help feeling some compassion for him, as his mother surveyed the ground through her *lorgnette*, and emitted a series of shrill comments, to which a group of grinning schoolboys listened with palpable delight. The pavilion struck her fancy very much. "What a capital house that must be to see the game from! I see they let windows. Dear Randolph, don't you think you could run across and ask how much they charge?" The umpires caught her eye. "Who are those men in white smock frocks? What are they for? Oh! I understand. I suppose one is an Etonian and the other an Harrovian.

No? They don't belong to either school? Then they don't care which side wins, and that makes them quite impartial. What a capital plan!" The title of "Captain," printed after the name of E. G. Whately, filled this intelligent woman with curiosity. "I thought they were all students — why do they have one Army man? I wonder if he is the Captain Whately we met at Sandown. I wish I wasn't so shortsighted, for I should recognize him in a minute, and I should like to ask him to tea." Throughout this soliloquy young Bounderley looked exquisitely uncomfortable, but his agony reached its climax when his mother, after intently watching Marsham's first innings, exclaimed with the air of one who suddenly lights on an illuminating discovery: "I tell you what it is. This youth means to go on all the evening unless he is stopped. Why don't they take him off and put on another?"

But the match was only one among many gaieties which Selina, impelled by sisterly affection, provided for Bertha.

The heat of summer suggesting outdoor

entertainments, we duly made our way to the Great County Sale at Earl's Court. Selina, who yields to none in her devotion to Royalty, chose a coign of vantage near the entrance, and curtseyed into the earth as the Duke of Cambridge passed her. The manœuvre, though well planned and prettily executed, somehow missed its effect, but I could not help thinking that the Royal eye rested rather approvingly on Bertha, who was standing next her elder sister.

I apprehend that Selina thought the same, for she remarked with asperity that some one —I did not catch the name—had "got very old," and that, if he had not been in his dotage, he must have remembered that she had been his *vis-à-vis* in a quadrille at the Loamshire Hunt Ball.

Naturally it was to the Loamshire Stall that we first directed our steps, feeling assured of a welcome from the magnates of our own county which would tend to re-establish our self-respect. But somehow the reality did not accord with our anticipations. All the Topham-Sawyers, indeed, were very affectionate, and

hoped that Bertha was enjoying her visit to us, "in spite of its being such a bad season;" and the wife of the head of my family constrained me to spend ten shillings on a buttonhole of her own making. But the daughters of the Lord Lieutenant seemed indifferent to their old neighbours; and all paid what I thought was unnecessary court to a mountainous matron, of aspect more gorgeous than gracious, whose name sounded like "Goldbug," and who, as we subsequently discovered, has taken the principal place in Loamshire for a term of years.

Mrs. Goldbug had a paragraph to herself in the next issue of *Classy Cuttings*, which described her as clad in "a wonderful dress of softest white silk with innumerable small flounces, and an enormous black crinoline hat. Beads, also, of the most gorgeous kind were worn in masses, the chain reaching almost to her feet."

The wearer of the "enormous black crinoline hat" stared, I thought, rather insolently at Selina, and though the Lord Lieutenant's daughter audibly murmured in her ear the

magical words, "Topham-Sawyer," the spell produced no effect. Mrs. Goldbug evidently knew nothing about "The County," and cared less. But "The County" knew all about her, and was working her for all she was worth—which, I imagine, was no trifle.

Thus mortified where we ought to have been made much of, we were not long in shaking off the dust of Earl's Court from our feet and plunging into the depths of the Underground. For, indeed, both Selina and Bertha were a little tired by their athletic efforts in the crowd at Stafford House the night before; and it is a characteristic of all the Topham-Sawyers that being tired is with them a synonym for being cross.

As soon as it was announced that the National Life Boat Institution would have a *fête* at Stafford House, Selina resolved to attend it; and though, as a rule, she is economical even to the point of parsimony, she hesitated not a moment in spending four guineas in tickets for herself and Bertha. She had got hold of a story that the house will shortly revert to the Crown, and she was determined,

as she said, "to see the dear old place once again." The period at which she was an habitual frequenter of its scagliola halls she conveniently but vaguely indicates as "those days." At the Cashingtons' last dinner-party I overheard her pensively murmuring to her neighbour, "No one was so much at Stafford House in those days. The dear Duchess was the kindest friend I ever had, and wanted to present me, only Mamma preferred doing it herself. No, we don't know the present people; and I am not sure we should care to. Everything is so completely changed. But I can't help having a feeling for the house where one spent so many happy hours, and I should like Bertha to see it just for once."

I believe that these romantic reminiscences do not lack a foundation of fact; for the late Mr. Topham-Sawyer sate on a railway board with the late Duke of Sutherland, and his wife and daughters were sometimes asked to the "large parties" at Stafford House. Whether they ever penetrated to the inner circle of the "small parties" is a question which I should not like to put to Selina,

for she has a just distaste for morbid curiosity.

So the Pilgrimage of Fashion was duly made, in a neat little vehicle supplied by the Coupé Company, which Selina wisely prefers to the rather mouldy productions of the Stuccovian livery-yard. Selina always looks her best in black, so she was in high spirits and not the least "tired." I satisfied myself that she had got her tickets, five shillings as a provision against emergencies, and the door-key, and then went with a good conscience to my club, dined there in great peace, and finished the evening at "The Man from Blankley's." Next morning both Selina and Bertha breakfasted upstairs, so as to renew their energies for the County Sale, and I had no opportunity of questioning them about the proceedings at Stafford House. But I looked out for *Classy Cuttings* on the ensuing Saturday, and was gratified by perusing a descriptive notice in which, as old-fashioned critics used to say, I was at no loss to distinguish the gifted touch of Mrs. Bottle Green. This lady made her fame by a Romance of High Life, in which

people were summoned to dinner by "the ancestral sound of a gong," and seated themselves on "what looked like dining-room chairs, but, rightly considered, were English History." An authoress thus high-toned is naturally in great demand as a chronicler of social "Functions" (I love that word), and I am told that she sucks no small advantage out of her connexion with *Classy Cuttings*. She was quite at her best in describing the performance at Stafford House. I transcribe her narrative *verbatim et literatim*:—

"The *fête* began at nine o'clock, but hours before then hungry sightseers disposed themselves in Pall Mall, ready to bestow an incriminating admiration on the "paying guests" of Stafford House. Two guineas would secure you admission, and those who arrived early enough and took a liberal view of the rights with which two guineas endowed them could shake hands with the Duchess, who stood halfway up the main staircase, and enjoy all kinds of consequent illusions. You might construct a scale of illusion by payment according to this plan—say so many guineas for sitting down to

supper next a Royal Duke, and so many for spending the whole evening in the company of a marquis—and I have no doubt that the scale was actually, if insensibly, put into practice to-night. It is said that this is the last day on which Stafford House will be thrown open, and certainly it could not have done itself greater credit for the last time. Vauxhall (as described by Thackeray), Marseilles, the entertainments of Sardona Palus—all these names which are connected with brilliant and fantastic entertainments passed through my head as I walked into Stafford House. Constellations of electric lights glowed on the Oriental carpets, the spacious stair, the marble Corinthian pillars, and the pictures after Veronese. The state apartments run round the whole of the first floor, and Louis XIV. speaks to you from every chair and from every couch. Up those stairs by Ronald Moore walked, and since then has walked, many a celebrated person known for accidental or intrinsic reasons. To-night—rare occasion—the great glass doors at the foot of the main stairs were thrown open. They are supposed by a tradition to be opened only for

Royal persons and for a departing bride. From top to bottom of this stair was a fluid crowd of well-dressed women and men, well-known and otherwise, particularly the former. Such a scene of well-mannered confusion would be difficult to equal.

A fine object of interest for the curious (and for the philosopher, too, perhaps) was the supper-tables in the banqueting-hall, for which £50 each was paid. A £50 supper-table acquires a kind of heroic interest to which it is difficult to do real justice. How mean appeared the £25 supper-tables laid in an annexe of the banqueting-hall! although it was argued, I believe, by those responsible for the sale that the sensation of being in the banqueting-hall could practically be enjoyed by those in the annexe—the sensation, that is, of being a £50 supper-eater."

Experts in architecture may know who "Ronald Moore" was, though I do not. The printer may be responsible for "Marseilles" and "Sardona Palus." But the moralization at the end is Mrs. Green's, and hers alone. As Mr. Squeers remarked when he

smacked Smike's face in the hackney coach, "That's real flesh and blood. I know the feel of it."

The exertion of fighting her way through this brilliant throng proved a little too much for Selina's strength. As I said before, she was "tired" next day; and talked peevishly of being "dragged round London," and "not being made of cast iron." Not content with bewailing her own fatigues, she insisted that Bertha (whose complexion and appetite would seem to indicate the soundest health) was "pulled down," and must see our medical adviser, Dr. Snuffin, whose practice in Stuccovia and the neighbourhood rivals that of his celebrated grandfather, Sir Tumley.

Bertha, who, in her native air of Loamshire can hunt all day and dance all night without turning a hair, has a whole-hearted dislike of quinine and cod-liver oil; and though, as a rule, she is properly submissive to Selina while she is under our roof, she now broke out in flat rebellion, and plainly said that if Dr. Snuffin gave her any of his abominations she would pour them down the sink.

Thus defied, Selina (who in the meantime had been exceedingly vexed with Snuffin for suggesting that what she called "nerve-exhaustion" was really dyspepsia, caused by errors of diet at Stafford House) suddenly changed her tune. She said that very likely Bertha was right after all. Certainly Dr. Snuffin was very foolish sometimes. He had a perfect mania for putting everything down to stomach; and, for her own part, she believed that both she and Bertha wanted "tone." She herself felt that she required more exercise than she got in London; and she had some thoughts of going in for "Norwegian Gymnastics." At any rate, it could do no harm to hear the lecture on them which was to be given at the Vicarage by the lady who invented the system.

To the Vicarage accordingly we repaired. Mrs. Soulsby's friends, previously regaled with tea and cress-sandwiches, were ranged round the drawing-room on small cane chairs. Bertha and young Bumpstead shared a sofa. The Vicar leaned statuesquely on the chimney-piece. Silence was proclaimed, and the lecturer

took her stand by the piano at the end of the room. She was a good-looking woman, whom, but for her Norwegian professions, I should have taken for a true subject of the Kingdom of Cockaigne; no longer as young as she once had been, but still happy in the possession of a waist which did infinite credit to her method. She began by saying that most systems of gymnastics failed because they were too ambitious. They taught us to walk, to run, to climb, to lift weights, to vault over bars, but they all forgot the indispensable preliminary. They did not teach us to stand. He, and more particularly she, who knew how to stand properly, knew the secret of strength, of health, and of beauty. If we would do her the honour to look at her we should see what right standing really was. The feet planted firmly and flatly on the floor—high heels were anathema. The body upright as a column, the head thrown back, the chest well expanded and extended. Thus every organ of the body was brought into its proper place; every muscle did its appointed work; every breath was a pleasure, every movement a picture. But important as all this was

for health, for activity, and for beauty, it was more important still as a contribution to national well-being, and the physical excellence of Englishmen yet unborn. "I appeal," cried the lecturer, warming to her work, "I appeal to all good citizens, and to those who care for the highest interests of the next generation. I address myself, not to mere *parents*—for the thoughtless rabbit, the mocking ape, the vain-glorious peacock, these are *parents*—but to those who in the truest and highest sense are mothers—to you, Madam," with an imperial sweep of her hand towards old Miss Wigmore (a cousin of Selina's through the Harley-Bakers), who shuddered at the appeal, and turned timidly towards Selina for protection. But at this moment a half-checked giggle burst from the corner where Bertha had been sitting, and I heard young Bumpstead on the stairs informing the waiter (who also keeps the Square tidy and blows the organ) that he could not have stuck it a minute longer—not for all the money in the bank.

VIII

My readers will not have forgotten that this summer we celebrated the Fortieth Anniversary of the Dedication of St. Ursula's Church. Indeed, some of them have rebuked me for dwelling on the fact at unnecessary length, and have even hinted that I did so because I had nothing more interesting to say; which, as Mr. La Fayette Kettle said to Martin Chuzzlewit, is "dreadful true." Undeterred, however, by any craven fears of unfriendly criticism, Mr. Soulsby announced at the close of the Festival that he would prolong its echoes by publishing in the Parish Magazine some "Jottings from a Journal," dealing with the events and reflections of ten years—or, as he prefers to say, of "a decade." These self-communings began in the July number of the Magazine, and are, I understand, to be con-

tinued monthly till July, 1903. I append some samples:—

JOTTINGS FROM A JOURNAL,

1890-1900

By the Rev. LANCELOT LUDOVIC SOULSBY, M.A., vicar of St. Ursula's, Stucco Gardens.

1890.

January.

1*st*.—Browning is gone, and Tennyson is going, and I shall soon be left alone. This dismal reflection impels me to draw more closely to surviving friends, with whom I have *rapports* based on intellectual and spiritual affinities. I therefore walked across the Park to see Timmins, Vicar of St. Remigius', Bayswater, who was a fellow-pupil of mine at Lycurgus House Academy, Peckham. He showed me his collection of church book-markers. Very remarkable; but the only one I envied was a lovely arrangement of pale puce silk, with a cross, an anchor, and a heart, embroidered in yellow beads.

2*nd*.—I described Timmins's collection to my wife, and mentioned that I had always taken

an interest in book-markers, and had collected them ever since I was a schoolboy. She said in reply: "But is not the human intellect the real book-marker?" This play on the word *marker* struck me as really witty, and (like all true wit) profound.

20*th*.—I am preparing a sermon on "The Sanctities of the Home," and, being anxious to get a good quotation, took down from my shelves the *Christian Year*. I turned to the poem on "Churching of Women," which was always a great favourite of mine. I had forgotten that it contained this divinely beautiful stanza—

> "Is there, in bowers of endless Spring,
> One known from all the seraph band
> By softer voice, by smile and wing
> More exquisitely bland?"

Surely "bowers of endless Spring" and an "exquisitely bland smile" are poetry of a very high order. And yet I understand that Mr. John Morley declines to include Keble in his "English Men of Letters." My wife attributes this exclusiveness to theological prejudice. This solution had not occurred to me, but

women have a wonderfully delicate instinct in these matters.

25*th.*—There is frost this morning. My wife, coming down to breakfast, quoted very aptly—

> "Stern Winter throws his icy chains,
> Encircling Nature round;
> How bleak and dreary are the plains,
> Late with gay verdure crown'd!"

If this weather continues, we shall very likely see ice on the Serpentine, as I did in 1860 (see my journal for that year).

February.

1*st.*—I forget if I have already mentioned that I playfully call my wife "Egeria." Her name is Emily; but I call her Egeria because she has been to me ever since we married a nymph of good inspirations. To-day her article on "Fashion and Passion" appeared in the *Pimlico Review*. This was quite a domestic event, and we had Sparkling Moselle at dinner. My curate was dining with us, so I did not make a speech, but I smiled at her over my glass and said softly, "Floreat Egeria." She smiled, oh! so sweetly, in return.

12*th.*—Mr. and Mrs. Smithers left us, having stayed for ten days at the Vicarage, for shopping and the Pantomime. We hope to stay for three weeks with them at Brighton in the autumn. Their house is some way out, near Aldrington, but it is more reposeful than the garish Métropôle. The Smitherses are new friends. I met them last summer at Mürren, and our common admiration for Alpine scenery made a lasting bond between us. My attention was first attracted to Mr. Smithers by hearing him quote at *table d'hôte* some fine lines, which I understood him to say were Wordsworth's, about—

> "An old half-witted sheep
> Which bleats articulate monotony,
> And indicates that two and one are three,
> That grass is green, lakes damp, and *mountains steep.*"

The last epithet is well chosen. My shortness of breath in climbing hills has been the keynote of my life.

18*th. Shrove Tuesday.*—We gave our annual Pancake Dinner. Lady Farringford, the Cashingtons, the Barrington-Bounderleys, and a few more. The conversation was very good. Mr.

Cashington mentioned that he had lately returned from a tour in Egypt, and was very interesting about the Sphinx and the Pyramids. This turned the conversation to foreign lands. Mr. Barrington-Bounderley displayed a surprising acquaintance with the products of the East, and told us a great deal about indigo and jute which I had not heard before. I thought it right to give a more spiritual tone to the conversation by saying that perhaps Asia was the most interesting of all the continents, and that great results might be expected from the exploration of Palestine. On this one of our guests quoted, very appositely, these striking lines—

"No Bibles and no books of God were in that Eastern land;
No Pope, no blessed Pope, had they to guide them with his hand."

This is profoundly true, but it had never occurred to me before.

19*th*. *Ash Wednesday*.—After morning service spent several hours at the Public Library searching for the lines quoted above. Found them in Faber's beautiful poem on "The Three

Kings." Read through the volume, and found it very teaching. Resolved to give two Lenten Lectures on (i.) Faber's Poems as he Wrote them; (ii.) Faber's Poems as Improved by the Editors of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

MARCH.

1*st*.—Breakfasted with our Clerical Club. My wife says that this is a truly *spirituel* gathering — cleverly using the word *spirituel* in two senses. The Archdeacon is *ex-officio* President. The Rural Deans are Vice-Presidents. All the Incumbents in the district are members, and Churchwardens have lately been admitted as honorary members. On this alteration in our rules, ——, whose jocularity is often ill-timed, made an allusion to Coachmen at Bath, but no one took it up. (I make it a rule, throughout these jottings, where I cannot speak in commendation, to mention no name, but leave a blank.) The conversation this morning was unusually brilliant, being chiefly sustained by my friend Dasher, Vicar of St. Blaisius's. To a member who, arriving late, knocked down a chair, he said, "Come

along, old cow." The laugh was general. We had grilled salmon for breakfast. Having given much attention to natural history, I had no difficulty in recognizing the fish as *Salmo ferox* of the naturalists.

25*th*. *Lady Day*.—So called on account of a religious festival which was observed in England before the Reformation. These survivals are very interesting, and illustrate the continuity of our national life. Archdeacon Bunker, who preached for me at Evensong, profoundly remarked that the English Church was no mushroom growth of yesterday, and quoted at large from Bishop Stubbs and Professor Freeman.

April.

1*st*.—I preached on the Yearly Resurrection of Nature, and quoted from Thomson's "Seasons" the beautiful line—

> "Come, gentle Spring! Ethereal mildness, come!"

My wife's undergraduate brother, who was staying with us, said he thought that the line described the sermon, for he had not heard anything so mild for a long time. Was

this wit? or humour? My wife said it was only impertinence.

2*nd*.—Dasher came to tea, and mentioned a brilliant repartee made by himself. He had been lecturing on the Church's seasons, and how to observe them, when a rude man in the audience asked what was the best way of observing All Fools' Day. Dasher replied, "It should be spent in self-examination"; and the gainsayer was silenced.

After Dasher had gone, my wife said she thought she had heard this story before, though with a different *tournure*. I have often noticed that the same stories are told by different persons as having happened in their own experience. This instance struck me as so curious that I made a note of it for the Psychical Society.

12*th*.—We had lamb for dinner—the first time this year. It was tough, and I said, "So young, and so untender." My maiden aunt, who is staying with us, and is a great Shakespearean, was much pleased.

30*th*.—Have been on a visit to Oxford, which I had not seen for many years. It is a city of

great interest and beauty. Before we went there, I read Mozley's *Reminiscences of the Oxford Movement*, so as to realize what some one very happily called the *genius loci*. Dasher recommended me to study a novel called *Verdant Green*, as being a faithful description of a lighter side of Oxford life. But there is something in the tone of the book which does not quite appeal to me. How superior is the *ethos* of my own beloved University, as drawn by a master-hand in *Julian Home!* Some of the buildings in Oxford are truly remarkable. My wife reminded me that Henry Kingsley calls the dome of the Radcliffe Library the third finest dome in England. We spent a pleasant evening in trying to fix the other two. St. Paul's Cathedral, I feel sure, is the first. *Query* —Is Bedlam the second?

MAY.

1*st*.—Walked in Hyde Park, and saw the first dandelion of the year. Brought it home to add to my *Hortus Siccus*, believing it to be the true *Dandelio gloriosa;* but my wife, who won the prize for Botany at Miss Piminy's, declares that

it is *Dandelio vulgaris.* I think it is my favourite Longfellow who says, so beautifully, that "Things are not what they seem."

15*th.*—The breakfast of the Clerical Club took place at Dasher's. When offering me the bacon, he said, I thought very happily, "Shakespeare?" (——, who is always captious, declared that this joke had already been made by Mr. Barry Pain; but I have been unable to trace it.) Our conversation was chiefly theological and literary. Speaking of recent publications, I remarked on the curious coincidence that the fascinating but perilous tale of *Robert Elsmere,* published in 1888, had been followed in 1889 by that truly restorative work *Lux Mundi.* Archdeacon Bunker observed, very impressively, that the Bane and the Antidote grew close together.

20*th.*—When I came down to prayers this morning, my wife told me that the housemaid had broken the bust of my spiritual master, the late Rev. Henry White, of the Savoy. I might have felt vexed, as this bust was one of four which I used to have in my rooms at King's, the others being of F. D. Maurice, George

Macdonald, and Jean Ingelow. But my wife commenced to warble in a birdlike manner—"Break, break, break!"—and said it was "the Housemaid's Song." This completely restored my equanimity; and I said we could not expect our happiness to go on for ever without a *break!*

30th.—Visited the Royal Academy, and found near the ceiling a portrait of my friend Timmins, in surplice and hood, with an embroidered book-marker in his hand. I am intensely loyal to Cambridge, with its precious memories of Byron and Wordsworth and Tennyson and Haweis; but I must confess that I envy the Oxford M.A. hood. When so arranged as to display the crimson lining, it is very effective.

JUNE.

1st.—Walking in Stucco Gardens, I met our excellent member, Mr. Barrington-Bounderley. He asked me a riddle which he said had delighted Mr. Arthur Balfour in the House of Commons. "Why is our greatest actress a perplexing character?" "Because she is a Mystery (Miss Terry)." I repeated this to my wife at luncheon, and she was very much

amused. She said, "What a superior man Mr. Bounderley is! What an *esprit d'élite!*" This is a very just tribute.

6*th.*—Dined with my parishioner, Mr. Kewsey, at the "Grand Night" at Lincoln's Inn, of which he is a Bencher. The Latin grace, *Benedictus benedicat*, struck me very much. Wishing to start the conversation pleasantly, I said it reminded me of an anecdote about some one who said *Franciscus franciscat;* but somehow I lost the point, and the anecdote failed. This was a disappointment, as I think it a duty on these occasions to show that the clergy are intellectually at least on a level with members of the secular profession.

10*th.*—Dasher and Mrs. Dasher came to tea. They mentioned that a very curious incident had taken place at their school-treat. A little boy, when asked if he could eat any more, said he thought he could if he stood up. My wife, who has a marked turn for apt quotation, instantly cited a couplet from a poet called Chadband, with whom I was previously unacquainted—

> "O! running stream of sparkling joy
> To be a soaring human boy."

25*th*.—An evening party at Fulham Palace. Mrs. Bunker, wife of the Archdeacon, wore a magnificent jet tiara, with a necklace of bog-wood beads. As I am an amateur in jewellery, I begged leave to examine these ornaments closely. Mrs. Bunker seemed pleased, and mentioned the curious coincidence that her grandmother, to whom the tiara had belonged, was dead; and that her great-aunt, who had given her the necklace, was dead also. This led to a discussion about fatality in connexion with precious stones; and Dr. Snuffin, who was present, mentioned that, when he walked the hospitals, a little boy swallowed, one by one, a necklace of wooden beads, and was none the worse. Dasher said that there was a similar instance recorded in one of the works of Charles Dickens, an author whom I have never been able to appreciate.

26*th*.—Woke with a headache. The thrilling excitement of these parties at Fulham takes too much out of me. Bishop Temple's lemonade is peculiarly strong.

JULY.

1*st*.—The Clerical Club breakfasted here. Mr. Barrington-Bounderley, as Churchwarden

of St. Ursula's, is an honorary member of the club. His parliamentary anecdotes are very agreeable, and tend to widen the sphere of conversation, which is apt to become too narrowly clerical. When I remarked on this, Dasher said with great humour, "Mr. Bounderley may be *wide*, but he is never *broad*." To-day Mr. B.-B. mentioned that a new member once addressed the House as "Ladies and Gentlemen," and, when he was called to order, sat down on his hat. This led to anecdotes of oratory, and I was interested to learn that Mr. Gladstone took egg-flip out of a pomatum pot. Made a note of this for a popular lecture on the "Beverages of Eminent Men."

Dasher, who is very well read in the literature of the eighteenth century, mentioned that a clergyman preached before Lord North, when Prime Minister, on the text "Promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west, nor yet from the south." I had heard this anecdote before, but thought that the Minister was Mr. Pitt. —— said, I thought rudely, that my version made nonsense of the story. I could not see his point, and shall continue to apply

the anecdote to Mr. Pitt, whom I have always greatly admired. His character seems to me more dignified than that of his eminent rival, Mr. Fox.

24*th.*—The weather has lately been very warm. Was it Madame de Staël or George Sand who said that an English summer consists of three fine days and a thunderstorm? It requires the genius of the French language to express truths in this epigrammatic form. Pending the thunderstorm, I have taken to a thinner jersey. Lady Farringford, who, in earlier life, moved much in aristocratic circles, mentioned that the late Lord Jersey's valet always called his master's undershirt a guernsey, as he thought jersey sounded too familiar. My wife said that *sark* would have been more appropriate. Even Lady Farringford, who is *très difficile*, laughed at this *bon mot*.

August.

1*st.*—Went to hear the Bishop of Melipotamus preach at Westminster Abbey. I always enjoy his style, which is modelled on Mr. Ruskin, Bishop Alexander, Dr. Farrar, and

Canon Scott Holland. It is his great charm that he never uses one word where twenty would do as well. As I alighted from the omnibus, it struck me that just ten years had elapsed since August 1, 1880. Mr. Gladstone was then Prime Minister, and now Lord Salisbury occupies his place. *Heu incredibiles humanarum rerum mutationes!*

19*th.*—The weather continuing very warm, we have come down to the Oatlands Park Hotel. I think it on the whole the most beautiful building in England. I am informed that it was once the residence of the Duke of York, whose father, King George III., was born in 1738, and whose nephew, the Duke of Cambridge, was born in 1819, and still commands the British Army. These links with the past are very remarkable, and I always make a point of writing them down. Our youngest boy saw the Duke of Cambridge riding in the Jubilee procession; and, if he lives to be fifty-eight, he will be able to say, "I have seen the grandson of a king who was born two hundred years ago." So short a thing is history.

SEPTEMBER.

1*st*.—Continuing my holiday, we came to Cambridge. The "Backs" are very beautiful; and it was a pleasure to show my wife the exact spot where I was once capsized in a canoe. If a friend had not rescued me with a punt-pole, this journal would never have been written—a solemn thought. The undergraduates are away, but I found several Dons whom I knew. Conversing on religious matters, I was grieved to find that the Deep Church has few followers in the University; and some sayings of the late Master of Trinity were quoted, which showed an imperfect sympathy with my favourite preachers.

King's College, of which I am an *alumnus*, made a profound impression on me, as it has always done ever since I was a Freshman. It is a joy to feel that I keep

"The young lamb's heart amid the full-grown flocks."

In the evening I read aloud to my wife Wordsworth's Sonnet on the "Inside of King's College Chapel," with which she was previously unacquainted. She said several times, "How beautiful!" This showed a great *justesse d'esprit*.

OCTOBER.

1*st*.—We have returned to London. The parlour-maid reports a "faint smell" in the pantry. This is vexatious, as we lately paid a large bill to a sanitary engineer for putting the drains in order. I think it was Dr. Johnson who said: "Sanitas Sanitatum, omnia Sanitas." The covert allusion to Ecclesiastes is very witty. My wife says that Drain-pipes are anything but Pipes of Peace.

12*th*.—The first Breakfast of the Clerical Club since the holidays. Dasher has been in France, and gave a curious instance of the difficulty which foreigners find in understanding our English pronunciation. A French lady said to him, "You have a name spelt C-h-o-l-m-o-n-d-e-l-e-y and you pronounce it Marchbanks." The mention of France led the conversation to foreign affairs, and there was a general agreement that Lord Salisbury managed them better than Mr. Gladstone. Of the latter Mr. Bounderley quoted this admirable couplet—

> "He played the deuce in foreign politics,
> And lost by honours what he gained by tricks."

The double sense of *deuce* and *tricks* caused general amusement.

25*th*.—I have not hitherto mentioned that during my summer holiday I was engaged in the congenial task of religious versification. I have been turning the Collects for the Saints' Days into rhymed lines of eight and six syllables. I am told that the compilers of hymn-books call this "Common Measure." This name was quite new to me; and I feel that the experiment at any rate is not common. The versions have been published in *Church Bells*, and I am going to reprint them on tinted paper, with vellum covers, as a Christmas Gift for the Parochial Guild of "Fishers in Deep Waters." I cannot forbear to quote a few words from my preface, which my wife thinks very touching: "The attempt will probably not be thought successful, but it helped me to feel, more than I had felt before, that the Collects are essentially poems. The language of the heart, when the affections are set on things above, and the emotions are deeply stirred, is truly the language of lyric poetry."

NOVEMBER.

1*st*.—Winter is approaching. Yesterday was Hallow E'en, and my wife, who is very well read in Sir Walter Scott, proposed playing "Cantrips" with the Curate and the District-Visitors; but we could not find the rules in Hoyle's Book of Games. To-day I walked over the Serpentine Bridge, and was much struck by the sunset beyond Kensington Gardens. It was both red and misty, and reminded me of a picture by Turner, who, next to Burne-Jones, is my favourite painter. As I looked at it a curious quatrain recurred to my memory—

> "A sunset at night
> Is the shepherd's delight:
> A sunset in the morning
> Is the shepherd's warning."

Is this Folk-lore? or nonsense? It sounds like Folk-lore. Not being quite sure that I had got the lines accurately, I referred them to my learned friend, Mr. Carp, Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford. He wrote back: "How carelessly people do quote! The true version is 'A *rainbow* at night, &c.,'" and added a reference to Lord Dundreary which I did not understand.

5th.—The feast of Guido Fawkes was duly celebrated by the young people of the parish. Crackers were let off in the street, and a very curious ditty was sung, which I do not recollect to have heard before. There seem to be two versions of it. One runs: "Gunpowder Treason and Plot," the other, "Inkerman, Powder, and Shot." I should have referred this discrepancy to Mr. Carp, but I know that he suffers a good deal from gout, and I was afraid of irritating him.

20th.—At the Breakfast of the Clerical Club to-day, remembering what was said on a former occasion (see my Journal for May 15), I raised the question whether the good things which one so constantly hears were really said as they are repeated, or invented by *raconteurs*. This was answered by Archdeacon Bunker, who was formerly a curate in the Oxford Diocese. He mentioned that he was present at a dinner-party at Cuddesdon when Lord Beaconsfield asked Bishop Wilberforce why he was called "Soapy Sam"; and the Bishop instantly replied, "Because I frequently am in hot water, and always come out of it with clean hands."

I had heard this anecdote before, and am much pleased to know that it is historical.

We have lately bought a new and very beautiful covering for the drawing-room sofa. It is an Art-fabric of sage green and primrose yellow. On seeing it for the first time, Dasher exclaimed: "O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" My wife was displeased, and I thought the humour far-fetched.

DECEMBER.

1*st.*—In these long winter evenings, I read aloud to my wife, while she works at a white book-marker which is to be added to my collection at Christmas. I am now reading a most interesting book called *Glimpses of the Obvious.* It deals with Literature, Art, Nature, Health, Money, Travel, and many similar topics. My wife enjoys these readings very much, and kindly asks my curate to join us. He says, however, he is too busy in the parish. It is a pity when a young man allows parochial zeal to interfere with culture.

10*th.*—The newspapers contain copious obituaries of Dean Church. My acquaintance with

him was very slight. I think, indeed, that we never talked on any serious subject except once in 1884, when he took me aside at the Church Congress, and told me that my not being appointed to the recently-vacant Canonry at St. Paul's was in no way owing to him; and that he would much rather have had me as a colleague than ——, whom he thought greatly overrated. This tribute from so eminent a man was very gratifying. The slightness of my acquaintance with Dean Church reminds me of what I have never yet noted — my even slighter acquaintance with Dean Stanley. To him I never spoke; but, curiously enough, I happened to call at the Deanery at Westminster the day he died.

26*th. Boxing Day.*—I do not feel well. I am feverish, and my head aches. I begin to doubt whether the custom of observing religious festivals by larger meals than usual and special kinds of food is salutary for body or mind. But the chains of custom are not easily snapped. *Mos pro lege* is a profound saying.

31*st.*—I have got the influenza. I see that the newspapers call it the Russian influenza;

and Dr. Snuffin says that the microbe is generated by the bodies of the Chinese who were drowned last year. I have often preached on "The Solidarity of the Human Family," but the phrase will henceforth have a new significance for me. Meanwhile, I wish I could think of a good quotation to end the year with—something at once new, appropriate, and poetical. My wife suggests some lines from her favourite Cowper, which, with much *espièglerie*, she has adapted to my present condition—

"Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had."

[End of Mr Soulsby's Journal for 1890.]

IX

In my younger days there was a popular book called *Autumns on the Spey*. Last year, Selina's brother, who is now the owner of The Sawpits, rudely said that we ought to bring out a companion volume and call it "Autumns on the Make." Selina was beyond measure incensed by this clumsy witticism, which has, indeed, led to a certain coolness between Tom Topham-Sawyer and ourselves; but for my own part I was constrained to confess that the gibe had something in it. When people make their home in London, the right disposal of the autumn becomes an urgent problem in their domestic economy.

In the early years of our married life, the "General Idea," as the strategists say, of our autumn manœuvres was something of the following kind. Towards July Selina used to pick a quarrel with the cook, which ended in

that functionary arranging to leave about the beginning of August. The next move was to develop a vehement interest in the career of the "up-and-down maid," or "tweeny," as she is called in the advertisement columns of *The Lectern* (where Ritualistic footmen advertize that wages are not so much a consideration as Church privileges), and to arrange for her to better herself by going to a place where she would be wholly "up" or wholly "down," and "a tweeny" no longer. By these methods we reduced our domestic establishment to three. The housemaid remained in London to take care of the house and the policeman. Selina's own attendant might truly be described as—

> "A maid whom there were none to praise,
> And very few to love,"

but of those few the dingy retainer was one, and she and he, happy in one another's company, went forth with us to face the desperate chances of the autumn campaign. Our first "objective" was Bertha's native home—The Sawpits. Mr. Topham-Sawyer was then alive, and he was very well pleased to entertain his

daughter and son-in-law during the tranquil month of August, when, to say the truth, he found it rather difficult to provide himself with society. Loamshire is not a grouse-producing county; and our amusements consisted of tennis-tournaments, picnics, and boating-parties on the Slowwater. Not very lively, perhaps, but health-giving, and, above all, inexpensive. From The Sawpits we moved at the beginning of the shooting-season to Proudflesh Park, where Selina made herself agreeable by pasting pictures on screens, answering acrostics, and singing in the evening, when she was duly pressed and the audience not too critical. I confess her performance sometimes reminded me of the occasion when "Miss Jessie Brown sang *Jock o' Hazeldean* a little out of tune; but we were none of us musical, though Miss Jenkyns beat time out of time, by way of appearing to be so." This is quite the tone of Proudflesh Park. When at length the head of my family showed unmistakably that he had enjoyed quite enough of our society, we pursued the even tenor of our way to the Barrow and the Dingle, the Abbey and the

Manor; culminating at the Lord Lieutenant's dilapidated castle, and not disdaining a quiet Sunday at Jim Jawkins's comfortable Vicarage, which fitted in very well between a week at the Wellbores' and three days with the De Trops. For the first few years of our married life, this plan of campaign served admirably well. But time has brought its changes. My father-in-law reposes under, instead of in, the family pew, and Tom acts the head of the house with a frank and jovial rudeness which is all his own. We therefore rather avoid The Sawpits, and dear old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer's dower-house is not exactly the place which one would choose for a prolonged visit. At Proudflesh a new generation is springing up, in which I find myself humiliatingly superannuated. The last time I played cricket with my young cousins against the local Band of Hope, my cut for one was greeted with derisive cheers of "Good old Bob!" "Stick to it, daddy!" and "By Jove! He's a stiff 'un!"

My bulk has increased considerably during the last few years, and my friends rather avoid giving me a mount. "I am sure I don't blame

them," says Selina with characteristically imperfect sympathy. "What with the oceans of champagne you drink whenever you have a chance, and your mania for greasy puddings, you are becoming a perfect object. Riding indeed! when I saw you on Bertha's hack, I only wondered that the people on the road didn't tell you to get down and carry it. I hear that Lord Salisbury has taken to a tricycle, and I am sure you ought to get one. It's simply tempting Providence to trust yourself on a bicycle."

So cricket and riding have failed me, and I am not in much greater request for shooting parties. Indeed, I may say that I have now renounced all sports of the field, or been renounced by them. As Matthew Arnold wrote to his friend Wyndham Slade, "I shall never look along the deadly tube again; but this will be no great blessing for the brute creation, as I never used to hit them."

Thus the general outline of our autumn plans has been gradually modified, and for the last few years we have spent August with Mrs. Topham-Sawyer at Harrogate. The dear old

lady pays for the flys, her maid does Selina's hair, and "The Granby's" charge for a private sitting-room, when divided between three, is quite supportable. But this year even that resource has failed us. Mrs. Topham-Sawyer has forsaken Harrogate for Bath, and Selina, who has been declaring all the summer that she wanted "tone," flatly refused to be "boiled to death in that relaxing hole." After Tom's outrageous rudeness about "Autumns on the Make," she declines to propose herself to The Sawpits, and the cousins at Proudflesh have significantly informed us that the youngest boy has brought back chicken-pox from Harrow. Hotels are expensive. Lodging-houses are undignified. We have a very good house over our heads in Stuccovia. Bertha is paying a round of visits in Loamshire, so we are freed from all necessity of amusing her; and Selina, after narrowly eyeing my pass-book, professed that, as we have to pay rent and taxes in London, besides an unheard-of rate levied by the Borough Council, she could not see the fun of running up fresh bills at the sea-side.

So it has ended in our spending August and

September at home, and, for my own part, I confess that I do not dislike the plan. I wear my oldest suit of tweed, smoke a pipe in the street, and divide Hyde Park (which looks its best when replanted for the autumn) with an eccentric gentleman who talks to himself, and of whom the park-keeper tells me in confidence that he is a Hirish gent who lost his property along of old Gladstone's muddling, and, in a manner of speaking, has never been the same man since. I practise my French on bewildered aliens who, misreading their Baedeker, have persuaded themselves that Buckingham Palace is the Tower of London. Both my clubs are closed for cleaning, and we are quartered on our neighbours; and this always introduces an agreeable element of novelty into one's social experience. At the Athenæum I hobnob with the Bishop of Barchester, who has just returned from Switzerland with his third wife and the pledges left him by her sainted predecessors. At the Guards' Club I try to imagine myself a soldier, and, regarding myself furtively in the glass, fancy that in my prime I should have looked very well in a scarlet tunic and a

bearskin. But, as my aunt (from whom I had expectations) very properly observed when I was choosing my profession, "After all, there is always the risk of war," and I am sure it is a risk which nature never designed me to face. So things are best as they are.

Meanwhile Stuccovia is nearly deserted. The Cashingtons are dogging the steps of an Illustrious Personage at Homburg, and the Barrington-Bounderleys may be seen at Brighton on a motor-car, urging their wild career from the Madeira Walk even to Medina Terrace. But, though our fashionable leaders have forsaken us, old Lady Farringford, whom it is increasingly difficult to dislodge from her own fireside, still trundles up and down Cromwell Road in her pre-Adamite landau, and often gives Selina a convenient lift to Harrod's Stores or Gorringe's. Moreover, the Soulsbys always make a point of spending September in London.

I believe I have intimated in previous chapters that Mr. Soulsby is passionately devoted to Nature. Like Mr. Witherden the Notary, he cultivates an equal love for "the mountainous Alps on the one hand and the humming-bird

on the other." The first dandelion of spring awakens in him thoughts that lie too deep for tears, and, after a choir-treat in the impervious shades of Epping, he has been heard to declaim with contagious enthusiasm—

"Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun."

Spring-time in the Alps is a theme with which, in the Easter season, he frequently decorates his sermons, and even "the Master," as he calls Ruskin, was never more tenderly eloquent about the "taller gentians and the white narcissus," the "scented undulations," and "the waves of everlasting green." As a matter of fact, Mr. Soulsby is so weak a vessel at sea that he has only once attempted the passage of the Channel, and prefers to reciprocate the many-twinkling smile of Ocean from the cheerful security of Margate pier. He always takes his holiday immediately after Easter. The spiritual tension of the preceding six weeks, followed by its inevitable reaction, has left him terribly unstrung, and it is necessary to recruit his nerves before he faces the responsibilities of the summer months, when nearly all the pews at St. Ursula's are occupied, and chairs are not seldom placed in

the aisle. "London is too vast for me," he says plaintively. "I am like the child in St. Paul's, and feel inclined to say, 'Take me away. The church is so big and I am so little.'"

By September the responsibility is diminished. Stuccovia is abandoned to cats and caretakers. St. Ursula's congregation sinks to vanishing-point. Young Bumpstead goes off on his holiday, and, while he is blazing away in the paternal stubbles, he "leaves," as he says, "the old Vic. to run the show on his own." Mr. Soulsby obtains help for Sundays from his friends of the Mirfield Community, and on week-days refreshes his parched spirit by renewed contact with Nature. He "worships the Mighty Mother"—to use his own phrase—from the deck of a Thames steamer or on a secluded bench in Richmond Park; and from every scene and every incident he draws fresh and happy illustrations for his Advent sermons. "The gorgeous but melancholy beauty of the sunlit autumnal landscape" awakes the deepest echoes of his soul. A meditation in Kensington Gardens—

"With sheddings of the pining umbrage tinged,

suggests innumerable lessons of Human Mutability. The sight of the pleasure-boats on the Thames inspired the famous passage in which he exhorted the young men of his congregation to row the perilous and exhausting race of life with their eyes fixed steadily on the goal.

But while Mr. Soulsby is thus congenially and profitably employed, Mrs. Soulsby is rather badly bored. She is, as her husband sometimes tells us in confidence, a creature made for Society. "Like a sweet-toned canary from a golden cage, she flew, almost unawares, into my study-window, She gladdens my work with her song; but oh! she deserves a better audience." This being the case even when Stuccovia is at its gayest, Mrs. Soulsby is extremely dull, and even, I fancy, a little peevish, in the solitude of August and September. To her, therefore, our determination to spend the autumn in London was distinctly a boon. She and Selina make little trips together. Sometimes they "do" the City churches, with Mr. Hare's *Walks in London* for their guide. They spend a happy day at the Stores. They listen with unabated joy to *The*

Lost Chord at the Promenade Concerts. On Sunday afternoons they desert St. Ursula's and make pilgrimages to hear Canon Gore at the Abbey or Canon Holland at St. Paul's. They look up long-forgotten friends in the remotest outskirts of Wimbledon or Tooting, disport themselves on suburban croquet-grounds, or drive away dull care with Ping-pong. But it is neither Croquet nor Ping-pong that, in this season of social depression, really sustains the flagging spirits of Selina and Mrs. Soulsby. Dr. Chalmers once spoke of the "Expulsive Power of a New Affection." The mild joys of Squails and Fish-Ponds which satisfied us in our youth, the maturer excitements of Nap and Poker, have speedily and simultaneously been expelled by Bridge.

Privately I doubt whether Selina would ever have become a victim to this new distraction if she had been guided solely by its merits as a game; for she really doesn't care a jot for the best game that ever was invented. But these pages have been written in vain if my readers do not realize by this time that Selina's heart beats in harmony with the music of the highest

spheres. "Every one plays Bridge," and Selina must play it too. A rumour has reached her that the odious Mrs. Goldbug, who behaved so rudely to her at the Great County Sale, has climbed to the topmost rung of the social ladder by dint of her willingness to play Bridge all day long, and of the graceful alacrity with which she loses her money to Illustrious Personages. Even Selina's old cousin, Miss Welbeck—

"A charred and wrinkled piece of womanhood,"

if ever there was one, a cardsharper from her youth, who had long been left high and dry by the receding wave of fashion, has acquired a sudden fame as the best female Bridge-player in London, and is called "Ponte Vecchia" in some of the smartest houses in Piccadilly.

This was enough, if indeed it was not too much, for Selina, who threw herself into the study of Bridge with all the intensity of a singularly intense nature, and spent laborious days in consulting the lively oracles of "Slam" and "Boaz." She has clear views about the necessity of "playing," "calling," "passing," and

"doubling to the score." She is severe on the weak player who declares no-trumps when he has a certainty in hearts, and is loud on "protective black suit declarations by the dealer." Like as a stage-struck damsel wanders about the garden, reciting the ravings of Ophelia, even so I hear my Selina murmuring to herself in secret places such cryptic precepts as these: "On a passed diamond call, a strengthening heart lead is advisable;" and "A good partner may often be given a doubtful no-trump heart or diamond declaration, when a weak one should only be entrusted with spades." My midnight dreams are haunted by a hollow voice which mournfully reiterates: "With a plain suit singleton and a single trump, a lead for the ruff is quite justifiable."

Now I confess that to me all this jargon is a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong. But I find to my astonishment that it conveys something to the mystic mind of Mr. Soulsby. Whether what it conveys to him bears any resemblance to what its author intended, I would not undertake to say; for our Vicar, like all his brethren of the Deep Church,

is an adept in the art of reading his own more recondite ideas into any passage which he admires. His preaching is nothing if not topical; and the close attention which he bestows on the transactions of Selina's Bridge-table has led me to believe that he is contemplating some allusion to the game in one of his lectures at the Parochial Club. I have told already how he urged the young oarsmen of his congregation to row their races by a method which would certainly have landed their boat in difficulties; and the counsel was well meant, though obscured by the perverseness of technicalities. The moral lessons of cricket are more easily handled, and the Vicar, as President of the St. Ursula's Cricket Club, is eloquent on "the ready hand, the quick eye, the simultaneous action, the training for life's battle," which are engendered by our national pastime. On football he waxes even poetic, and last winter when our team, captained by Bumpstead, celebrated in a debauch of cocoa and buns its victory over the Amalgamated Cabdrivers' Orphanage, he electrified the party by declaiming the football-song which he had sung

as a boy at Lycurgus House Academy, Peckham—

"When you've had the toil and the struggle,
The battle of ankle and shin,
'Tis hard in the hour of triumph
To pass it another to win;
But that is the luck of the battle,
And thick must be taken with thin.

They tell us the world is a struggle,
And life is a difficult run,
Where often a brother will finish
The victory we have begun.
What matter? We learned it at Peckham,
And that was the way that we won."

Now, supposing that my surmise is well founded, and that Mr. Soulsby intends to add to this athletic trilogy a lecture on the Game of Life, as illustrated by the Laws of Bridge, I commend to him these wise words from the sporting column of *Classy Cuttings*:—

"Judgment in Bridge is not limited to the declaration of trumps; but (as in life) consists in rightly estimating the capacities and temperaments of both your adversaries and partner, and trusting them or not accordingly."

When I was at Oxford I had the advantage

of attending the present Bishop of Rochester's lectures on Political Science; and I hope I can still recognize that commodity, even when I meet it in the columns of a Society Paper.

X

I AM extremely glad that I induced my excellent friend Mr. Soulsby to let me republish in these pages some Jottings from his Journal. The circulation of the *Cornhill* is, I believe, considerably larger than that of *St. Ursula's Parish Magazine*, and the republication has put the Vicar in touch with friends and sympathizers all over the country, of whose existence he was previously unaware. He says, with winning meekness, that he had lived through many a lonely decade—

> "Without a hope on earth to find
> A mirror in an answering mind,"

for even Mrs. Soulsby was not always able to follow the trend of his heart-longings; and now, suddenly, the air all round him is vocal with responsive notes, and he stands no longer isolated and alone in the great world of intellect and spirit. Sympathetic correspondence on psychical and æsthetic themes pours into

the Vicarage letter-box, and the demand for the *Parish Magazine* rivals that for Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff's 9th and 10th volumes. Now, I am well aware that, even without these newly-developed interests, Mr. Soulsby leads what he calls "a very full life" (though young Bumpstead and Bertha between them seem to do most of the parish-work), and I hope, therefore, that I shall not be understood as reflecting injuriously on a friend and pastor, if I say that diary-keeping seems to be the natural occupation of an idle man. I quite willingly admit the bearing of this stern judgment on the rough memoranda out of which this Log-Book is evolved. When, like the House of Lords in *Iolanthe*, one—

> "Does nothing in particular,
> And does it very well,"

there is a real though unintelligible pleasure in recording the performance. Soulsby, who believes that Atavism is the Sum of Philosophy, would probably say that heredity has been at work. And, in my own case, this is antecedently probable, for a journal of my great-grandfather's was discovered last year in

the lumber-room at Proudflesh Park, and the present head of the family has turned an honest penny by publishing some extracts from it in one of the magazines:—

"Saw the Learned Goose, and I was not a little surprised at seeing it discover the cards Mamma and myself had chosen out of a Pack, and afterwards shuffled in the Pack. After looking at a watch, it discovered the hour, &c. But what most surprised me was that the Goose explained which of us had drawn the several cards. A learned Pig also displayed very wonderful Abilities and Sagacity. He instantly obeyed the Man who told him to keep his Ears and Tail quite still.

"This being Christmas Day, myself and wife at Church in the morning. At the collection, my wife gave 6d.; but, they not asking me, I gave nothing. O! may we increase in Faith and Good Works, and maintain the good Intentions we have this day taken up."

Those two entries, when I casually encountered them, seemed, as they say, to strike a chord. In that enviable faculty of being easily amused by simple pleasures, I recognize

a leading feature of my own character; and Selina was not slow to point out that my ancestor's meditations on Christmas bore a strong resemblance to my own. "He put nothing in the plate, and then hoped he might live up to his good resolutions. That is so exactly like you, Robert—always professing to be going to do something, and never by any accident doing it. For my own part, I think the old gentleman was a humbug, and I only wish you weren't so like him."

The charge of doing nothing is certainly hard to bear from the lips of one who has a right to be supported in luxury by my toil; and yet it is even harder to refute. As I glance over the pages of my diary, and see how September has slipped, and October is slipping, away—"the petty done, the vast undone"—I feel the pangs of a manly self-abasement. Is it conceivable, I ask myself, that any one will care to know that I rowed on the Serpentine, and went to *Are you a Mason?* and supped at Frascati's; played "Bumble-puppy" with friends at Wimbledon, or spent an afternoon in watching the "Goose-match" at Harrow? But even

while I chewed this bitter cud of meditation, and had almost resolved to bring the Log to an abrupt and unhonoured close, my eye lit on a striking column in *Classy Cuttings*. It bore the ever-attractive heading "Rank and Fashion," and it contained some truly exhilarating paragraphs, set forth in all the majesty of large capitals:—

"MR. JESSE COLLINGS will sail on the 27th inst. for India on a holiday tour.

"THE REV. W. SPIERS has been appointed Wesleyan Minister for the Windsor Garrison.

"H.R.H. PRINCE PURACHATRA OF SIAM will go into residence at Cambridge at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term.

"MR. HERBERT G. SMITH has been appointed Private Secretary to the Right Hon. Horace Plunkett.

"MR. S. R. CROCKETT is renewing his acquaintance this month with his native Galloway."

The contemplation of this column put new spirit into me. Like Dominie Sampson, when he had toasted Meg Merrilies in the "cupfull of brandy," I felt "mightily elevated, and afraid of no evil which could befall unto me." To Rank I lay no claim; and I yield all imaginable

respect to the Princely Progeny of Siam. But, if Fashion concerns herself with the preferment of Mr. Smith and the ministrations of Mr. Spiers; with Mr. Collings's voyage and Mr. Crockett's rambles, I feel that I too may be Fashionable. Truly we are greater than we know. As Sam Weller repelled Mr. Smauker's patronage at Bath by observing that "me and the other fash'nables only come last night," so I am inclined to believe that the real "Fash'nables" —the cream and flower of the social world—are those elect souls who watch over deserted London and keep the flame of cultured intercourse alight during August, September, and October. Alas! we are a dwindling band. Lady Holland—most gracious and hospitable of hostesses—is gone; and Mr. Charles Villiers, with his inimitable conversation; and Sir Charles Wyke, with his astonishing reminiscences. But Mr. Frederick Cadogan still adorns the town and links us to the days of D'Orsay. Mr. FitzRoy Stewart is in daily attendance at the Offices of the Central Conservative Association; and at my club I often eat my luncheon at the next table to Mr. Kenneth Howard, who boasts the unique distinc-

tion of not having slept out of London for eleven years. Surely in such company I am at least as fashionable as Mr. Collings on his P. and O., or Mr. Crockett in the wilds of Wigtonshire; and I ought to be happy, but somehow I am not.

October is the one month in the year when I wish to be in the country. In London, October is a premature and shabby winter. In the country it is the last month of summer, with a superadded charm of its own. Not being, like Soulsby, a cockney born, I cannot be satisfied with the jaded air of Kensington Gardens or the dusty boscage of St. James's Park. I think regretfully of autumns in Loamshire, with its great tracts of yellowing woodland, the beech avenue at The Sawpits, and the bracken in Proudflesh Park. These, of course, are memories of childhood, but even at Harrow October was one of the pleasantest months of the year; for then we bade good-bye to the Moloch of cricket which had devoured the summer, and welcomed the advent of football, which (having always been tall and bulky) I could play at least with enjoyment to myself, if not with advantage to my side. Poor Edward

Bowen "voiced," as they say, the emotions of the month—

> "October brings the cold weather down,
> When the wind and the rain continue:
> He nerves the limbs that are lazy grown,
> And braces the languid sinew;
> So while we have voices and lungs to cheer,
> And the winter frost before us,
> Come sing to the king of the mortal year,
> And thunder him out in chorus!
> October! October!
> March to the dull and sober!
> The suns of May for the schoolgirls' play,
> But give to the boys October!"

At Oxford it was just the same. The beginning of the October term saw everything at its best. Every one came back from the Long healthy and cheerful and sanguine. Every yearning was satisfied. For the æsthete, there was the Virginia Creeper on the Founder's Tower at Magdalen; for the Ritualist, the Dedication Festival at St. Barnabas; for the "Young Barbarian," all those forms of salutary violence in which he most delights; for the studious and the cultured, the joy of good resolutions and the determination that this term, if never before, they would read steadily

and eschew loafing. If we had got through our Schools in the summer, we were safe for two years from that one device of Satan which has been mysteriously permitted to mar the otherwise flawless perfection of existence amid the Dreaming Spires.

And when that Last Enemy of undergraduate life had been confronted and overcome, October, in country houses, had still its peculiar charm. For those who love to "wade through slaughter," there waited the fat pheasant, tame to the point of familiarity. For such as prefer the nobler art of venerie, and yet have a constitutional unwillingness to break their necks, there was cub-hunting, late enough in the day to permit a comfortable breakfast, and pursued amid fences so "blind" that one might decline them without imputation of cowardice.

In virtue of my hereditary connexion with "The County," and of certain pecuniary formalities discharged by my father, I was entitled to wear the chaste uniform of the Loamshire Hunt—a scarlet coat with pea-green facings, and gilt buttons displaying a fox's mask and crossed brushes over a cypher of twisted L's. A

manly diffidence about my powers of horsemanship, coupled with an innate reluctance to pay unnecessary subscriptions, restrained me from thus bedizening myself; but a man may look very much like a gentleman in a well-cut black coat, and well-cleaned breeches and boots; and, though an indifferent rider, he may feel quite comfortable on the back of a horse which has learnt the vital accomplishment of standing still when required to do so. But I am anticipating the glories (and the perils) of November. In my favourite October I was happy enough in "rat-catcher" costume, and on an animal closely akin to the Convent-horse in "Ivanhoe," of which the Prior justly said that it "could not but be tractable, in respect that it draweth much of our winter firewood, and eateth no corn."

The other day as I sate in my lonely drawing-room (for Selina had gone to her Bridge-party), gazing out on the desolation of Stucco Square, with its pall of clouds, its carpet of rotten leaves, its dingy turf, and its starveling cats, those recollections of October as it used to be came back with all the force of contrast, "troubling" (I quote from a published sermon

of Mr. Soulsby's) "every chord of thought into a sweet though melancholy music which I vainly endeavour to recall."

While I was musing, the fire burned; and I suddenly resolved to turn my back on the dismalness of London, and once again see the glories of October in a more lucent air. In the autumn a middle-aged man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of Congresses. The newspapers are full of them. The Social Science Congress is, I believe, defunct, and lives only in Matthew Arnold's inimitable preface to Wordsworth. But the British Association is going strong and well. Miners, railway-servants, and all sorts and conditions of men—co-operators and trade-unionists, Zionists and Methodists, specialists in poor-law and enthusiasts for education—come together in their Congresses and read papers, and wallow in statistics, and attend receptions, and gambol at picnics. Only last week I had an interesting talk with my very good neighbour the minister of the Wesleyan Chapel in Stucco Road. Though myself (as Mr. Soulsby well knows) a Churchman, I always cultivate friendly re-

lations with the Dear Dissenting Brother, and I listened with sympathy to his account of the refreshing time which he had enjoyed at the Methodist Œcumenical Conference. What most thrilled me was my friend's account of his intercourse with that truly apostolic man, Bishop Hoss of the Episcopal Methodist Church of America. What is it in the genius of the American people that makes their proper names so purely pleasurable? *Bishop Hoss.* I pause on the combination, and roll it like a sweet morsel under my tongue. When Matthew Arnold had been introduced to the Burgomeister of Hamburg, he wrote: "I am really quite glad to have called a man *Your Magnificence,* and to have been asked to dinner by him." In the same spirit I feel that I could really give a good deal to have been able to accost a bishop—even of the Methodist variety—as "Old Hoss," without a suspicion of slang or even colloquialism.

My Methodist friend's experience gave a practical turn to my thoughts about October. When Congresses were so plentiful and so edifying, I felt that, in the beautiful words of the

hymnodist, some droppings should be allowed to fall on me—even me. Bishop Hoss should find a rival in Bishop Wilberforce, who was at that moment opening the Church Congress at Brighton. The Métropole is within two hours' journey of Stucco Square. It was a decisive inspiration. I left Selina to her own devices, and went off for three days' change of air and scene to "the agreeable fishing-village of Brighthelmstone in Sussex," where, according to my favourite gazetteer (edition 1790), "the Prince of Wales has lately erected a residence during the bathing season." What would George IV. have thought of a Church Congress? How would the choice spirits who junketed in the Pavilion a century ago have regarded the motley throng which peoples it to-day? I leave these problems to the spiritual insight of Mr. Soulsby, whose paper on "The Church in India according to Mr. Rudyard Kipling" was one of the most attractive items in the programme of the Congress.

I have always been fond of Brighton, ever since the distant days when I took my exercise in what the municipal code of fares

describes as a "hackney carriage, fourth class," drawn by a goat and attended by a nursery-maid. For me there is a sense of health and gaiety in its "unending and manurious street." I bask in the blinding glare; and the sea is made dear to me by the thought that I am not obliged to cross it. These are the normal charms of Brighton; and to-day they were enormously enhanced by the all-pervading atmosphere of Clericalism. Everything was seen through a clerical medium; everywhere the clerical note was heard. To gaze upon "the Church of England by representation"—a term which applies much better to the Congress than to Convocation—is indeed a rich and rare experience. I am well aware of all that is to be said against the "iron uniformity of Rome"—indeed I have myself said a good deal of it at parochial gatherings in St. Ursula's Parish Hall. I am perfectly conversant with the sarcastic contrast between Roman ecclesiastics, "all turned out of the same mould, each the exact reproduction of the other," and English clergymen, "each the product of an individual training, each cut and

chiselled and fashioned into his separate form by the manly handling of his Public School and his College"; and yet, as I surveyed the interior of the Dome at Brighton and fought with brawny curates for my chop at Mutton's, I felt that after all the admirable liberty of Anglicanism had gone very near the perilous border of license. I hasten to add that I do not refer to matters of faith and doctrine. With such I do not presume to intermeddle. My remark is confined exclusively to matters sartorial and tonsorial.

Lord Beaconsfield once complimented an ecclesiastical friend on being "an expert in clerical zoology"; and a cultivator of that science could scarcely find a better field for observation than the arena of the Church Congress. Let me just jot down, with no pretence of scientific accuracy, a few of the leading *genera* and most distinctive species which met even the cursory gaze. First there were dignitaries, and of dignitaries many types. There were dignitaries with gaiters and dignitaries with trousers, dignitaries with pectoral crosses and dignitaries with gold *pince-nez*, dignitaries with corded

hats and dignitaries with hats amorphous but not corded. Then the beneficed clergy—indeed a motley throng! Long beards and short beards, streaming whiskers and "Newgate fringes," clean-shaven faces and cavalry moustaches. Coats in infinite variety: secular frock-coats with braided edges, clerical frock-coats shaped liked postmen's tunics, "Norfolk jackets," and jackets unowned by any self-respecting county. Here and there, swimming rare in the vast whirlpool of the Dome, a tail-coat reminiscent of Mr. Keble and the late Master of Balliol; here a monkish habit, not recognizable as belonging to any order in particular; there a smart great-coat with a velvet collar; here an Inverness cape, once grey and now weather-beaten to brown; there the "Alexanemos, or priest's cloak," a garment much advertized by *The Lectern;* here one of Messrs. Vanheems and Wheeler's celebrated cassocks, which "combine elegance in shape with ease in genuflecting"; there the double-breasted waistcoat which displays the golden stud; here the branching white neckcloth of the "corner man" at a nigger entertainment; there the "jam-pot"

collar loved of the earlier Ritualists. No cast-iron uniformity here, I trow—no slavish aping of Roman rigidity.

But when I turn my gaze to the junior clergy an insidious change begins to present itself. I note something which really resembles uniformity. Here and there a struggling moustache attracts the observant eye; here and there a white bow rather neatly tied—and did I catch a glimpse of brown leather trying shyly to hide itself in a crowd of shooting-boots and cycling shoes? The "Jemima" boot, with elastic sides and a plain front, survives, I think, only among such as, being comfortably beneficed, are out of chaff's way; and the only patent leather which I saw at Brighton gleamed on the shapely foot of Mr. Soulsby.

But, taking the curates as a mass, they begin to resemble one another. They are developing into a type. When the observer sees one of them, he can say with tolerable certainty, That youth is an English curate, not a Roman Seminarist, nor yet one of Mr. Spurgeon's students; not a waiter, nor yet a Hussar. These young men are cleanly shaved all round, their hair is

cut short and parted on one side. They wear black straw hats, Roman collars, black jackets and waistcoats, and trousers turned up at the bottom, serviceable-looking shooting-boots, and silver watch-chains carried across the waistcoat from one pocket to the other. They are a healthy, wholesome, clean, manly-looking lot of youths; and, though the supply of ordinands is falling off in point of quantity, I am persuaded that in quality it has vastly improved in thirty years. I well recall the epicene and namby-pamby crew whom Dr. Vaughan so happily described: "Men who choose the ministry because there is a family living waiting for them, or because they think they can make that profession—that, and none other—compatible with indolence and self-indulgence; or because they imagine that a scantier talent and a more idle use of it can in that one calling be made to suffice."

But here my reminiscences were disturbed by a chorus of feminine voices, and I saw a strong contingent of District Visitors from St. Ursula's and "Fishers in Deep Waters," all swathed in the black waterproof of parochial piety, surging

out of the hall in which Soulsby had been reading his paper. "Wasn't it wonderful? It was *quite* worth coming down for. I am *so* glad I came. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I suppose we shall have it in the Magazine. I had no idea the Church was so strong in India. Somehow I had got quite a wrong notion from *Plain Tales from the Hills*. Perhaps it's stronger in the valleys? And did you know Mr. Kipling was such a good Churchman? Oh yes! don't you remember that beautiful poem of his about a Sergeant's Wedding, and 'The Voice that breathed o'er Eden'? No, I have quite forgotten it. Well, you must look it out when you get home."

Suddenly the murmur of admiration lulled, and the sea of waterproof parted in two as Mr. Soulsby appeared—blander than ever, even to the point of the Seraphic, and limp from the effort of the morning's exercise.

"Hallo, Soulsby," roars a voice which I recognize as that of my friend Bounderley. "Come along to our place, and have a bit of lunch. You must want it after that performance. No? Why the deuce are you in such a hurry to get

back to the shop? Have a drink at any rate, even if you can't stop for the feed."

But Soulsby is mildly firm. He must return to London by the next train. He only came down at great inconvenience, because the Bishop pressed it *à l'outrance*, and he is a dear friend of many years. The ceremonies of the Harvest Thanksgiving at St. Ursula's are, as the theatrical folk say, "in active rehearsal"; and Mr. Soulsby's whole energy is centred in a new development, "The Brown Paper Service." "It is quite a new idea, and a very beautiful one. Each child in the schools is to bring its little offering for the Cab-Drivers' Orphanage; and, to avoid invidious comparisons of value, each offering is to be rolled up in brown paper. All the brown paper parcels are to be piled up in a pyramid on the chancel steps, and after a few words from me are to be blessed by Archdeacon Bunker." To this development of the newer Ritualism, I reply, beneath my breath, "*none other or otherwise*"; and mentally determine to stay at Brighton till the Harvest Festival is over.

XI

I STAYED on at Brighton longer than I had intended. The occasional relaxation of domestic discipline is always enjoyable. I like being able to come down late to breakfast, without being told reproachfully that the tea is stone cold. I like being able to take a nap after dinner without the risk of hearing, at a later hour, that my mouth has been unbecomingly wide open, or that I have been "snoring like a pig." Then, again, I enjoy the opportunities of social observation which a hotel affords, and I feel that I can turn them to good account. Mr. Soulsby has just woke up to the fact that the Parish Magazine wants a little enlivening, and would be all the better for a dash of frivolity; so I have some thoughts of letting him have a series of papers in a vein of delicate humour, on "Life in a Lift," or "Mirth and Marvels at the Métropole." If it is true that good Americans when they die go to Paris, there is at any rate much show of

reason for the theory that the Ten Tribes, when they were lost, went to Brighton. Like those "bright children of the sun," as Lord Beaconsfield called them, I love the climate of the King's Road, and find it highly conducive to a healthy appetite. I protest that I could live for ever on the beafsteak puddings and stewed pears which "Mutton's" provides in perennial profusion, and, if moderate exercise is required to stimulate digestion, I can obtain it by a modest expenditure on carriage-hire. "'Tis the gondola of London," exclaimed Lothair as he sprang into the hansom. The gondola of Brighton is the one-horse victoria in which we jog placidly from Hove to Kemp Town. It is roses, roses all the way. Nature bathes Worthing Pier in golden light, and Art delivers her message in the majestic elevatian of the Grand Hotel. It is, I fear, a sign of growing old that Dancing Dogs and Performing Fleas and Happy Families no longer quicken in me the eager emotions of my boyhood; but, when I saw a street-bred urchin ignite a cracker between the legs of an itinerant preacher of Calvinistic doctrines, all

the innocent joy of youth revived; and ten minutes later I found myself listening with unaffected pleasure to the homely humour of "The Scarlet Mr. E.s." [1]

Thus pleasantly, and I hope blamelessly, ran out the mellow weeks of October. But, after a time, even Brighton begins to pall upon the jaded taste, and its amusements to savour of monotony. As autumn deepens into winter, the thought of Stuccovia becomes unspeakably attractive. I say my prayers with my window open towards London. By faith I see (and taste) its familiar fogs. The inward ear catches the welcome note of its muffin-bell. Selina took advantage of my visit to the Church Congress to fill the house with workmen; and the little jobs which were to have been finished in three days have by some mysterious process of economic law been lengthened out into as many weeks, during which I was a compulsory exile from my home. Selina, casting about for the cause of this inconvenient protraction, is inclined to believe that she has found it in the

[1] An eccentric band of minstrels who performed on the pier last autumn.—ED.

foolishness of the Christian Social Union, which has "stuffed the workmen's heads with the notion that they are to do exactly what they like, and that we are to pay them what they ask for doing it." Of course this gibe is aimed at Bertha, who takes *The Commonwealth;* but that dear girl is quite equal to the occasion. "Really, Selina, I wonder how you can talk such nonsense about things which you don't the least understand. You might just as well say that Sir Blundell Maple is a pro-Boer because his people couldn't get that hideous chintz in the drawing-room matched for you. I am truly thankful they couldn't, for it always made me feel ill; and, as to the Working Man and Socialism, and all that, you had better read Canon Holland's essay on 'Every Man his own Grandmother.' Of course I don't expect you to agree with him; but at any rate you would know what you were talking about, and that's more than you do at present."

It will be inferred from this exhibition of repartee that Bertha has come back in excellent form from her round of visits in Loamshire.

She has indeed arrived a good deal sooner than we expected; but Selina, who generally is extreme to mark what is done amiss, has no word of reprobation. Last year she used to say that it was really shameful of Bertha to desert her home just at the time of year when Mamma most wanted some one to keep her company, and that she really didn't understand the selfishness of girls in the present day — so very unlike what she had been brought up to.

Now she declares that Bertha is perfectly right to come to London and have a little fun, "especially as her riding is stopped this winter, poor girl." This last shaft is aimed at me, for it is reported in the family that Bertha's horse has never recovered from the strain of carrying me when I was last in Loamshire, and has been condemned to spend the remainder of his days between the shafts of Mrs. Topham-Sawyer's brougham. Be that as it may, Bertha has arrived in high health and spirits, looking forward, as she says, to a "jolly Advent." By this slightly unliturgical expression I understand her to mean a great many special services,

an orgie of Christmas decoration, and, if only the weather is propitious, some skating with young Bumpstead on the Serpentine. Can it be that my Selina perceives, and even approves, the "motion of a hidden fire" which trembles in her sister's breast?

Meanwhile, of course, Bertha has brought us a budget of county news from Loamshire —how the odious Mrs. Goldbug, who was so rude to Selina at the Great County Sale, has actually secured a Royal Personage for her best shooting-party; how there was a rumour that she was going to marry the impecunious Lord Lieutenant, and how his eldest daughter eloped with the gamekeeper sooner than endure such a stepmother; how this desperate act now proves to have been premature, as Mrs. Goldbug denies the engagement, and how the Lord Lieutenant is said to have taken to drinking in consequence of his rejection.

It appears that one of the social events of Bertha's autumn was a great gathering of the Primrose League, convened by my brother-in-law, Tom Topham-Sawyer, at The Sawpits.

"A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers."

The "glory," which should have rhymed with "Tory," was in this case quenched by an unfortunate incident, and Bertha, whose relations with her brother have, since he came into his possessions, been a little strained, told us with rather unamiable glee that Tom's great peroration about the Flag and the Empire was absolutely ruined by a sudden incursion of the "steam-organ"—that Tom lost his temper most shockingly, and swore that unless that infernal thing was stopped he would turn the whole boiling of them out of his park. Bertha went on to say that her brother, who has the true squire's sense of his own importance, had addressed strong remonstrances to the Grand Council of the Primrose League, complaining of the discourtesy with which he had been treated, and threatening to withdraw from the League unless his utterances were received with greater respect. The result of this remonstrance was seen in the following edict of the

Grand Council, which Bertha delightedly produced from her pocket-book:—

"When officers of Habitations are arranging with proprietors of merry-go-rounds to come to their open-air *fêtes*, it should be stipulated that during the speeches the music of the steam-organ should cease."

Bertha, still smarting from Selina's attack on the Christian Social Union, made great capital out of this decree. "It's all very well to abuse the C.S.U., Selina, but I don't think we ever published anything so absurd as that. I must say that from what I saw of them at the *fête* I thought your Primrose friends were an extraordinarily ill-mannered set of people. Certainly poor old Tom is a deplorable speaker, but it was too rude to interrupt him on his own lawn. When Canon Gore or Father Adderley addresses the C.S.U. no one dreams of playing the hurdy-gurdy."

The mention of these ecclesiastics leads me by a natural transition to the familiar fields of theological enquiry. I learn that the Harvest Festival at St. Ursula's went off with extraordinary success. The Brown Paper Service

had a whole column to itself in *Church Bells*, and Mr. Soulsby's address to the children, delivered on the occasion, is to be published in a pamphlet by the Froebel Institute. At St. Ursula's the Harvest Festival is always what Mr. Gladstone once oddly called "a new commencement." The autumnal lull is over, and parochial existence is becoming tense and eager. Fresh activities are developed every day, and Mr. Soulsby's life is more than ever "full."

This November a "Home-Reading Circle" has been formed in connexion with the Parochial Club, and the Vicar has decided that the general subject of the winter course shall be "Some Aspects of the Roman Controversy." He prides himself on discerning the signs of the times, and feels that just now the Roman idea is in the air, and demands the intelligent consideration of instructed Anglicans. He is animated by no Protestant bigotry, no desire for polemical advantage. "Nay," he says in dulcet tones, "I have a tender place in my heart for our erring aunt, the Church of Rome. We, of this fold, may not call her mother; but

is she not our mother's sister, though she may have wandered far astray?"

The syllabus of the winter's readings suggests *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, *The Casting of Nets*, *The Vicar of St. Luke's*, and *The Eternal City*, as illustrating different aspects of the same theme; and the Vicar's intense preoccupation with the proposed course has awoke a responsive interest in the parish. Bumpstead, indeed, with insular prejudice, dismisses the whole subject as "tosh"; and Bertha, though she expresses herself with more maidenly grace, concurs in Bumpstead's judgment. "Of course, the scene of *Helbeck* being laid at Levens makes it interesting in a sort of way, and it's rather fun picking out the real people in Dick Bagot's book. But I got hopelessly stuck in the *Eternal City*, and I really think the Vicar of St. Luke's was the greatest goose I ever came across. Imagine his falling in love with a district-visitor, who was old enough to be his mother! I'm sure he was better off as a Jesuit, even though they did make him dig in the kitchen-garden. But I can't imagine what good Mr. Soulsby thinks it will do one to read about such absurdities."

Other people, less frivolously constituted, have taken the subject seriously, and the more Protestant section of the congregation are inclined to think Mr. Soulsby's sudden interest in Romanism rather a dangerous sign. There are disquieting rumours in the parish that at the Church Congress he was observed to applaud Lord Halifax's reference to Invocation, and that he was heard discussing the question of Authority with the Rev. Leighton Pullan. All this, so different from the harmless æstheticism of his previous career, has filled the Fishers in Deep Waters with a sense of unrest; and in truth I believe that our dear Vicar has entered on a phase of theological transition. Lord Beaconsfield, who, being an alien alike in blood and faith, had a peculiar power of observing our ecclesiastical phenomena dispassionately, long ago described a case of development not unlike that of the Vicar of St. Ursula's.

Lovers of *Lothair* will remember the transformation which befell Mrs. Putney Giles's brother—the Rev. Dionysius Smylie—with his Hebrew scholarship at Trinity College, Dublin, and his Protestant commentary on the Apoca-

lypse, after he had been appointed to one of Lothair's livings. "The Doctrine of Evolution," wrote Lord Beaconsfield, "affords no instances so striking as those of sacerdotal development. Placed under the favouring conditions of clime and soil, the real character of the Rev. Dionysius Smylie gradually but powerfully developed itself. Where he now ministered he was attended by acolytes and incensed by thurifers. The shoulders of a fellow-countryman were alone equal to the burden of the enormous cross which preceded him; while his ecclesiastical wardrobe furnished him with many-coloured garments suited to every season of the year and every festival of the Church. At first there was indignation, and rumours or prophecies that we should soon have another case of perversion, and that Mr. Smylie was 'going over to Rome;' but these superficial commentators misapprehended the vigorous vanity of the man. 'Rome may come to me,' said Mr. Smylie, 'and it is perhaps the best thing she could do. This is the real Church, without Romish error.'"

The description was written more than thirty years ago; but the type described is still to be

found within the precincts of our admirable Establishment; and, at least in some respects, it is illustrated in the person of our Vicar. I do not share the apprehension that Mr. Soulsby will "go over"; but, if I had any such fears, my reliance would be on Mrs. Soulsby. I heard the Bishop of Chichester at the Church Congress declare that England demands a married clergy; and, if this be so, England certainly gets what she demands. I have heard Archdeacon Bunker, when preaching for the Queen Victoria Clergy Sustentation Fund, wax eloquent over the "sanctifying influences which the Divine Ordinance of Marriage sheds over a married priesthood." And among those influences not the least important is the restraining power which a clergyman's wife can exercise over a husband "tempted else to rove" in a Romeward direction. Mrs. Soulsby has presided for ten years over the ecclesiastical life of Stuccovia. She has organized bazaars, directed District Visitors, and suggested subjects for sermons. She has been a leading official of the "Girls' Friendly Society," and a familiar figure on the lawns of Fulham and

Lambeth. If I know her, she is not the woman to be dethroned without a protest. The late Dr. Littledale once wrote some "Plain Reasons against joining the Church of Rome." If Mr. Soulsby were to confide any Romeward inclinations to the ear of his Egeria, I fancy he would have to encounter some "reasons" against such a course, even plainer than Dr. Littledale's.

Until this winter my Selina has always been in the very thick of all parochial activities. But now, when there is so much subdued excitement in the air, I find to my surprise that she is taking no part in the "Home-Reading Circle." Bridge occupies a good deal of her time, and she is exemplary in chaperoning her sister. But a new interest has entered into her life, more engrossing than either Chaperonage or Bridge; and this new interest is Health.

Lord Lytton, who was fond of oracular sentences, once pronounced that "Money is Character.' It might be at least as wisely said that Health is Occupation. Once let the subject of Health take firm possession of the mind, and no other occupation is necessary or even pos-

sible. It claims all day and all night for its own. Systems of drainage and rules of diet; hygienic clothing and boiled milk; prophylactics against every physical ailment and prescriptions for every mental emotion, occupy our working hours. Hot water cheers our meals. Gymnastic contortions take the place of exercise. A hop-pillow, a cup of *consommé*, and a teaspoonful of bromide minister to our nightly needs, "till the flood of morning rays Wakes us to" cocoa-nibs and a plasmon biscuit.

Into this new and exciting career Selina has plunged with characteristic vigour. I stated in the early autumn that she had been a good deal overwrought by the exertions of the Season. She was "run down," and was unluckily deprived of that inexpensive month at Harrogate, on which in previous autumns she had so much relied. The experiment of spending August and September in London was not altogether a success. She cannot shake off a feeling of lassitude, and reminds me with cruel frequency that men who manage their affairs properly can generally contrive to take their wives to Homburg or Marienbad.

The present state of our finances rendering those jaunts impossible, Selina has betaken herself, rather ungraciously, to such methods of relief as lie within our more immediate reach. In plain words, she has taken to quacking herself violently; and I confess that I feared some collision with our excellent friend Dr. Snuffin, whose treatment has been rather roughly pushed on one side. But Snuffin, who inherits all the courtly tact of his eminent grandfather, Sir Tumley, and knows the length of Selina's foot pretty well, assures her that very likely she understands her own case best; and quietly awaits the day when she will return in penitence to the paths of allopathic orthodoxy. Meanwhile we ring the changes on various systems, "ancillary," as Snuffin says, "to science; unauthorized indeed, but not hostile." Last summer we had a brief period of devotion to the lady who taught Norwegian Gymnastics. When we could hear her for nothing, in Mrs. Soulsby's drawing-room, it was all very well; but, when it came to ten guineas for a course, the case wore a different complexion.

"It's all very well for her to lay down the

law about standing properly! I am sure she looked as stiff as if she had swallowed the poker. And, as to her waist, which Robert admired so, I believe she was laced so tight she could hardly breathe. Never tell me that such tortures are good for one's health. I only wonder that Mrs. Soulsby can encourage such imposture."

Gymnastics being discarded, we have fallen back on new and strange drugs. "Personally," says Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley, who always knows the last cry, "there are only two drugs that I believe in—gold and granite." But, as Selina justly remarks, the one sounds so very expensive, and the other even too strengthening. "I don't believe I want those violent tonics. Indeed, I am always better without any drugs at all. I believe immensely in diet. After all, the blood is the life." This led to a brief trial of the "Salisbury System." The day began with a cup of coffee, in which a dash of Price's glycerine was occasionally substituted for sugar as a treat. Hecatombs of oxen were swallowed in the form of minced beef, and our boiler barely contained the oceans of hot water

with which the beef was washed down. But this system of diet soon became monotonous, and has been rejected in favour of Grape-nut Food, which for the moment carries all before it. Selina is not one of those selfish souls who, when they have received a benefit, can keep it to themselves. She desires to see it in widest commonalty spread among her kinsfolk and acquaintance. "I believe Grape-nuts would be the making of you, Robert. They are so much more digestible than oysters and caviare and curried lobster, and all those horrid strong-tasting things which you devour. After one of your heavy dinners, you snore in your armchair till I expect to see you go off in an apoplectic fit before my eyes. Now, if you would only dine on grape-nuts, and sit for three minutes after dinner in a hip-bath of cold water, you would feel a different being—and perhaps you wouldn't be obliged to have your waistcoats enlarged every six months."

XII

THOUGH the experiment of spending the autumn in London was not altogether a success, the winter is passing very pleasantly. The fogs which have so extensively prevailed have afforded Bertha excellent opportunities of losing her way in returning from her District, and it has become quite a recognized institution that Bumpstead should see her home just about tea-time, when he does extraordinary execution among Selina's buttered scones. His performances in this field elicit no acrid criticisms, but my dear wife banters him with a winsome playfulness which recalls the days when I used to ride over from Proudflesh Park to The Sawpits, and decline old Mr. Topham-Sawyer's "glass of sherry and a biscuit" in favour of the tea and muffins dispensed by the fascinating Selina. That was more than twenty years ago, and if I asked for muffins

to-day the request would be received with some painfully frank allusion to incipient obesity.

The Soulsbys are away. The exertions and emotions of the Harvest Festival proved too much for the Vicar's highly-strung organization. He was overwrought already, and that Brown Paper Service was what old Lady Farringford, who is now a little doddering, called "the last hair upon the camel's back." Signs of brain-fag and nerve-exhaustion made themselves apparent to Dr. Snuffin's watchful eye, and Soulsby was recommended to take three weeks at Torquay.

"No lark could pipe in skies so dull and gray,"

he quoted pathetically, as his excuse for deserting his parish so soon after his autumn holiday; and, turning his face sunward, he left his flock to the tender mercies of frost and fog. During the Vicar's absence, Mr. Bumpstead became Acting Editor of the Parish Magazine, and his brief period of responsibility was signalized by a remarkable occurrence. When the December number appeared, it was found to contain an anonymous set of verses, some of which I append:—

"I am a loyal Anglican,
A Rural Dean and Rector;
I keep a wife and pony-trap,
I wear a chest-protector.
I should not like my name to be
Connected with a party;
But still my type of service is
Extremely bright and hearty.

Of course, one has to keep abreast
Of changing times and manners;
A Harvest Festival we keep,
With Special Psalms—and banners;
A Flower-Service in July,
A Toy-Fund Intercession,
And, when the hens lay well, we hope
To start an Egg-Procession.

My wife and I composed a form
For dedicating hassocks,
Which (slightly changed) we also use
For surplices and cassocks;
Our Bishop, when we sent it for
His Lordship's approbation,
Remarked: 'A very primitive
And pleasing compilation.'

To pick the best from every school
The object of my art is,
And steer a middle course between
The two contending parties.

My own opinions would no doubt
Be labelled 'High' by many;
But all know well I would not wish
To give offence to any.

One ought, I'm certain, to produce
By gradual education
A tone of deeper Churchmanship
Throughout the population.
There are, I doubt not, even here
Things to be done in plenty;
But still—you know the ancient saw—
'Festina lentè—*lentè*.'

I humbly feel that my success,
My power of attraction,
Is mainly due to following
This golden rule of action:
'See all from all men's point of view,
Use all men's eyes to see with,
And never preach what any one
Could ever disagree with.'"

The appearance of these rather ribald rhymes occasioned nothing less than a parochial storm. Loud was the outcry of the Fishers in Deep Waters. "It is too shameful," they exclaimed, "to hold up the dear Vicar to ridicule in his own magazine! Not, of course, that it was the least bit like him; but obviously it was meant for him. How dreadfully pained he will be! I

shouldn't wonder if he would resign the living. Who in the world could have written the lines? They are in the worst possible taste, and not the least amusing. I am sure, if I knew who it was, I would never ask him inside my house again. And how *could* Mr. Bumpstead have printed them? Well, for my own part, I always thought him a very underbred young man. And he is completely uneducated, and not the least fitted to be Mr. Soulsby's colleague. I do hope the Bishop of London will do something. But the worst of it is that this new Bishop likes that sort of young man, and calls them 'old chap.' I suppose they remind him of the people he lived with in the East End."

Oddly enough, my own modest roof remains unshaken by this storm. A year ago it would have been a very different story. Selina would have said, "Well, I am not the least surprised. You know what I always said about that man; and you see it has come true. If he put those horrid verses into the Magazine in order to make fun of the Vicar, it was most impertinent; and, as to saying that he didn't see the point of them till he read them in print, all

I can say is that if that's the case he must be even stupider than he looks."

Such, I say, would have been the language of a year ago; but to-day Selina says the verses are really very funny, and remind her of the things which Lord Curzon used to write in visitors'-books when she used to meet him in country-houses. And from certain mysterious signs of sympathy which I see passing between Bumpstead and Bertha, I am inclined to believe that my sister-in-law, who has come to think Mr. Soulsby "an absolute fraud," must have handed the peccant poem to her clerical admirer. I believe parochial rumour asserts that I wrote it, but this I categorically deny; and I should recommend the Vicar, if he feels aggrieved, to make personal enquiries at Sunbury Common, where, unless things have very much changed, the worthy Soulsby will hear, as the advertisements say, something to his advantage.

But Christmas is upon us, and "amicablenesses" (as Miss Miggs called them), rather than "unpleasantnesses" (as the Parish calls them) should dominate the season. For my own part, I feel no difficulty in being amiable,

when I contrast a Christmas in Stuccovia with a Christmas in Loamshire. "Christians, awake," with the thermometer below zero; the arctic cold of the family pew at Proudflesh Park or The Sawpits; the faint odour of long-descended ancestry wafted up from the vault beneath; the concourse of uncongenial cousins; the masses of revengeful food; the Servants' Ball and the Workhouse Treat—all these "Christmassy sort of things," as Byng in *Happy Thoughts* called them, belong to a remote past. In London no one compels me to eat what disagrees with me, or go to churches where I catch cold, or dine with relations whom I don't like, or attend gatherings at which I feel out of place. And then, again, we happy denizens of Stuccovia are within half-an-hour by Underground Train of the centre of life, civilization, and commerce.

Ere yet my Selina had fallen like a star from its place—in other words, before she had married me and settled down in Stuccovia—one of her partners was the admirable Lord St. Aldegonde, who used to hunt in Loamshire. Mrs. Topham-Sawyer fondly fancied that his reason for choosing our very undistinguished country

was his admiration for Selina, who certainly looked her best on a horse; but his real inducement—as with generous outspokenness he did not scruple to tell us—was that, though the hunting was infernally slow and the whole establishment seemed to have come out of Noah's Ark, it was a good grass country and lay within two hours' journey of London, whereas his own ancestral castle frowned upon the Border. "What I want in December," he used to say, "is a slice of cod and a beefsteak, and, by Jove! I never could get them at home. Those infernal cooks spoil everything. I was obliged to come to town. It is no joke having to travel three hundred miles for a slice of cod and a beefsteak." I am entirely of one mind with St. Aldegonde. Whether the object of one's desires is a beefsteak or a Christmas card, a slice of cod or a wedding-present, it is no joke having to travel three hundred miles to get it. We, who are hampered by no Northern castles, have got through our Christmas shopping this year very comfortably, and, on the whole, inexpensively. For the barrel of oysters which we used to send

to The Sawpits we have substituted a box of chromatic sweetmeats made by a lady in reduced circumstances. A photograph-frame for Mrs. Topham-Sawyer works out at considerably less than the Gorgonzola cheese of more affluent days; while the Soulsbys, on their return from Torquay, will find our Christmas gift awaiting them in the shape of a copy—already cut, but very carefully handled so as to avoid thumb-marks—of *Lady Marguerite Manquée.*

This may fairly be said, by others than its publishers, to be the Book of the Season. It has smashed *The Eternal City*, and obliterated *Tristram of Blent.*

The Manqués, Manquées, or De Manques, for so their name was indifferently spelt in the earlier stages of our history, were a family of Norman extraction. Some genealogists refer their origin to a hardy Norseman who exercised regal rights in the Isle of Man long before the Earls of Derby were heard of; but Mr. J. Horace Round dismisses this pedigree as legendary, and represents the original De Manques as companions-in-arms of the Conqueror. From successive kings they obtained grants of

royal land, stately castles, hereditary offices, and writs of summons. They sedulously mixed their blood with all that was noblest in European chivalry, and increased in splendour and opulence as the centuries rolled on. Dynasties rose and fell, religions changed, revolutions brought the proudest heads to the block, and confiscation impoverished the wealthiest; but no disaster ever touched the fortunate De Manques. They seemed to be in some mysterious way the spoilt children of fate; and, as our national history unrolled itself, a tradition gradually gained ground in the highest circles of the social mysteries that the prosperity of this favoured race depended on some talisman or charm. "The Luck of the Manqués" became proverbial, though nobody except the head of the family, the eldest son, and the domestic chaplain knew what it was. There were romantic stories of a secret chamber where it was death to penetrate unbidden. The wife of one of the Lords De Manque had once peeped through the keyhole, and had spent the rest of her days in a strait-waistcoat. A chimney-sweeper who had climbed to the top of the Donjon-Keep

and peered down the chimney, exclaimed, "Well, I *am* damned," and fell, a blackened corpse, into the moat. The intrusions of a profane curiosity being rebuked by these signal catastrophes, "the Luck of the Manqués" took its place among the recognized mysteries of high life. Lord Houghton wrote a monograph about it. The Psychical Society made it the subject of some curious experiments. Mr. Augustus Hare (who was a cousin of the Manqués) gave several detailed, though inconsistent, accounts of it in successive volumes of his Memoirs. But, in spite of all struggles for the light, the secret remained involved in Cimmerian darkness. Meanwhile the fortunes of the illustrious line had come to centre in the person of an only girl. The last Lord De Manque (they had been Barons since the Flood and Earls since the Conquest) was a man of desperate adventures, and broke his neck in trying to ride an Irish hunter over the Great Wall of China. Thus heroically cut off in his prime, he left an infant daughter and heiress—Marguerite Manquée. She would have been a peeress in her own right but for some tiresome technicality about a wed-

ding-ring. As an earl's daughter she was styled by courtesy "Lady," although some purists might have disputed even that modest claim; and she inherited all her father's estates, equal in size to a German Principality. Her mother had died in giving birth to her, and the sole trustee and guardian appointed by her father's will was the domestic chaplain. As Marguerite was only a year old when she succeeded, she could not, in spite of amazing precocity, be admitted to the Secret of the Luck, of which the chaplain was now the sole depository. She was brought up in her principal castle, under the careful superintendence of accomplished governesses, none of whom was below the rank of a Baronet's daughter; and she was sedulously shielded from contact with the outer world. But the development and characteristics of so great an heiress could not fail to evoke the interest of a right-minded society.

People began to ask one another if they knew anything of that Manquée child, who must really be a big girl by now; and, in reply to these queries, disquieting rumours began to circulate. It was stated, with much show of

certitude and circumstantiality, that the Heiress of the De Manques had no hair and no teeth; while others went so far as to add that she had only one eye. "Ah, poor child!" cried sympathetic friends, "every situation has its drawbacks, and all lots have their crosses. But it is really too bad to spread these stories about her if they are not true. We shall see when she comes out."

When Marguerite Manquée was presented, social curiosity was keenly on the alert, and the verdict on her appearance was highly favourable. She was tall and nobly made; her bearing was majestic. She wore a lifelike peruke of the richest auburn. Her *râtelier* was the finest product of Parisian art. Her one eye flashed with all the fire of her Crusading ancestry; and the other, fashioned out of a single opal, rather added to than detracted from the impressiveness of her general appearance.

But how came a pretty girl of seventeen to be so strangely defective in those appendages which nature, as a rule, bestows impartially on the high-born and the lowly? Society might have asked the question in vain, only

an Illustrious Personage, who had danced with Lady Marguerite at the Court Ball, insisted on knowing the truth. Then, all unexpectedly, the mystery of the Luck of the De Manques was disclosed. The talisman which from generation to generation had been so jealously guarded in the secret chamber of Castle Manque had vanished out of existence. It could never be recovered; the secret was at an end, and the story might be told.

And what a weird story it was! Lionel Manqué, tenth Baron De Manque, who flourished A.D. 1000, had conceived an unhallowed passion for his grandmother. His ill-starred love is commemorated for the warning of posterity in the Table of Kindred and Affinity. Heaven had manifested its wrath by saying (through the mouth of a Palmer), "You shall have what you desire. You have admired the toothless and the bald. Henceforward no child born to the Manqués shall ever have a tooth in its mouth or a hair on its head."

The doom which fell upon the house in the person of the guilty Lionel was reversed by the piety of his successor, Bawdewyn. His exploits

in the Crusades expiated his father's sin, and an Eremite of Ascalon, to whom he had paid a handsome tribute of Turk's heads, gave him in return a mysterious elixir, which could be warranted to stir into generative activity the barest scalp or the deadest gum. This invaluable fluid the triumphant Crusader brought home in a pocket-flask. A golden pyx of cunning workmanship was fashioned to receive it, and a secret chamber was hollowed in the thickness of the castle-wall to enshrine the talisman.

For generation after generation this talisman, always safeguarded by the Lord, the Heir, and the Chaplain, went on doing its beneficent work. The Palmer's curse was frustrated, and each child born to the De Manques was in time subjected to the healing influence, and developed hair and teeth in the richest abundance. But the story closed in gloom. When the last Lord De Manque died, the Chaplain, finding himself in sole possession of the secret, suddenly yielded to a diabolical impulse. A life-long dipsomaniac (as subsequent investigation proved), the temptation to sample a new liquor was too much for him. He drank

the elixir, took the next train for London, sold the gold pyx to coiners who melted it into sovereigns, and, recovering from a paroxysm of inebriety, was overcome by remorse and drowned himself in the Serpentine, leaving a letter in his trousers-pocket to say what he had done. The spell was broken, and henceforward the heiress of the De Manques must dree her weird of toothlessness and alopecia.

This romantic tale, instinct with historical and supernatural interest, spread like wildfire. At every ball where Lady Marguerite appeared, young men of fashion were drawn to her by an irresistible attraction. They longed to toy with those exuberant tresses; they hung in rapture on every word which issued from those gleaming teeth. And a further zest was added to their passion when it became known that the loss of Marguerite's eye was due to the duenna-like zeal of her governess, who had inadvertently jobbed it out with a ruler when correcting her pupil for winking at the schoolroom-footman. This last was a trait of hereditary character not to be overlooked in a story of the affections.

Among the band of ardent youths who worshipped at Lady Marguerite's shrine, the most ardent and the most irresistible was young Lancelot Smith, who inherited from his father (a friend of Charles Kingsley's) a power of passion which carried all before it. He loved with an uncalculating and self-abandoned ardour which seemed to belong to a more strenuous age and a warmer climate than our own. The crisis of his fate was reached when, one day, slipping into Lady Marguerite's boudoir in order to lay a *billet-doux* upon her blotting-book, he found her dozing on the sofa. It was a scorching afternoon in July, and Marguerite was fatigued by a long day's shopping. Her hair was thrown carelessly upon the piano. Her dachshund was playing with her *râtelier* on the velvet hearth-rug. The opal reposed in an ash-tray. *It was too much.* Lancelot saw Marguerite as she really was. The rich, concrete fact surpassed even his most ardent imaginations. His passion broke the narrow bounds of convention, as an imprisoned ocean bursts its dam. Flinging all restraint to the winds, he tickled the coral gums with a peacock's feather torn from the

hand-screen, and rained hot kisses on the virginal, cold, white scalp.

. . . . . .

Lancelot and Marguerite were married in Westminster Abbey. When the Dean joined their hands, the Home Secretary joined their names. The Smith-Manqués live splendidly in Lady Marguerite's castle, now completely refurnished by Gillow; and it is understood that at the Coronation the barony of De Manque is pretty sure to be revived.

XIII

ALTHOUGH at the time of writing it is only mid-January, there is a feeling of spring in the air. Our letters from Loamshire report the first crocus of the season in the south garden at Proudflesh Park; and Tom Topham-Sawyer, sending us a brace of pheasants, remarked with characteristic grace that in this muggy weather nothing would keep, and so he was obliged to clear out his larder. But, though the physical season is thus abnormally mild, there is a certain rigour in the religious atmosphere of Stuccovia, and for its cause we must look back a little. The Vicar returned from Torquay just at the end of Advent; but the accumulation of Christmas Trees, Social Gatherings, and Plum-Pudding Services has proved a little too much for even his renovated strength. On the last night of the old year he conducted a novel devotion in church. It was announced as "Voices of Eminent Preachers heard through the Phono-

graph, with Illustrative Comments;" and was so timed that, just as the clock struck twelve, Dr. Liddon was heard saying, in the tone of a half-stifled Punch, "We stand at a division of time: we look backward and we look onwards." The effect, as the Parish Magazine said, was supernaturally solemn, but the reaction was too much for Soulsby. The pew-opener tells Bertha that he swooned in the vestry, and that, when she pressed a glass of water to his lips and the curate told him to buck up, he only murmured with half-closed eyes—

> "O, 'tis a burthen, Bumpstead, 'tis a burthen
> Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven."

When Bertha reported this collapse, Selina observed with acrimony that if Mr. Soulsby would only take Pulsatilla before preaching and Grape-nuts afterwards, perhaps he wouldn't be always making such an exhibition of himself. But Dr. Snuffin, who has in high perfection that faculty of sympathy which is so invaluable in a family physician, likened his patient to a high-bred racer which will go till it drops; and recommended him to lie in bed till ten every morning, and to drink a pint of dry champagne

with his luncheon and dinner. The churchwardens, the district-visitors, and the Fishers in Deep Waters joined in a chorus of warning against "overdoing it," and the Vicar so far yielded as to call in a good deal of clerical assistance. "Jim Adderley" has more than once swooped down from his high perch in the Marylebone Road; and the Cowley Fathers from Dartmouth Street have been unremitting in their attentions. Hence arises that rigour of which I spoke before as marring the mildness of our religious atmosphere. I have observed that, whether on grounds of reason or of mere prejudice, English people dislike a man in a petticoat—"a woman with a great peard under her muffler"—and though Father Hollings and Father Waggett have given us most excellent sermons, their appearance in Stucco Road (which is the part of our parish least touched by ecclesiastical influences) has given rise to unfavourable comment. The minister of the Wesleyan Chapel has preached a discourse on the "Vestments of Baal," which has been reported in the local press; and Miss Scrimgeour, a member of the "Presbyterian Church

of England," whatever that may be, has been distributing from door to door a warning poem (printed at Chelmsford), which lamentably fails to distinguish between our truly Anglican organizations and those of an alien type.

THE COMING OF THE MONKS.

Wherefore should they come to England,
Companies of banded foes:—
Come to England in the open,
While their tactics England knows—
If their influence is evil
Where the legislature ties,
What their mischief where their system
Legislative law defies?

Freedom!! Aye, aye, give them freedom
Such as we and ours may claim,
In the ranks of social labour
To uphold an honest name;
But I know not, oh, I know not
Where is England's common sense,
That she lets her halls to traitors
And ignores her own defence.

Is it not enough that lately
Up and down the land has sprung
Locked and barred and bolted buildings
For the hiding of our young?

Many a father would have sooner
Parted with his household stuff;
Many a mother's heart is broken—
Tell me, is it not enough?

Do we want our boys to wither
'Neath a monasteric blight;
With the priestly bands around them
And the Bible out of sight?
Should we swell the list of voters,
Who at touch of foreign spring,
Through the ballot could endanger
The position of our king?

Wherefore should they come to England?
Wherefore should their haunts be free
From the government inspector
In this land of liberty?
And since nuns are noted beggars,
How does English law avail,
While these bold bag-carrying spinsters
All escape the common gaol?

An alarmist! aye, I know it,
My opponents know it too;
Know the danger and the duty
Of the Protestants they woo:
It might rouse us could we witness
How they grin behind their cowl,
At our ineffectual clearing
Of the nest they come to foul.

O, the sorrow would be lessened
If old England did not *know;*
But she has the lights of ages
Falling on her welcomed foe:
God sends night to those who love it,
And our warnings men will note,
When the papacy in England
Takes her hostess by the throat.

"This is eloquence," said Queen Caroline, when Jeanie Deans had made an end of pleading for her sister. "This is eloquence," cried many a Stuccovian Protestant, when he pictured the British father "parting with his household stuff" to save his son. The scene of the Papacy taking her hostess by the throat seemed to suggest a woodcut for the *Police News*. The thought of our monastic preachers "grinning" at us "behind their cowl" was excessively annoying; and, as an excuse for not giving is always welcome, our front doors have been rudely banged in the face of the "bold bag-carrying spinsters" from the Convent in Stucco Vale.

To what lengths this religious rigour would have gone, and how far it would have frozen the stream of neighbourly goodwill, it skills not

now to enquire; for, before a parochial crisis had time to arrive, a sudden scare of small-pox has recalled our attention to the secular sphere. As long as the disease confined its ravages to Camberwell and Poplar we regarded it with philosophic calm.

> "We bore their sufferings with such equanimity
> That every one exclaimed, 'What magnanimity!'"

We agreed that sanitation was everything—that, if people would live in filth, they must expect disease; and, as Stuccovia is a remarkably clean and airy district, we felt that virtue was its own reward. But one fine day a case was reported from Stucco Gardens Mews, and in an instant the whole spirit of the place was changed. How the disease had made its way into so well-regulated a parish we shall never know; and indeed the sceptical are inclined to believe that it has never been within five miles of our sacred precincts. But undoubtedly one of the District Visitors found a child with a rash, and insisted on calling in Dr. Snuffin, who, with admirable zeal for the public health, told all his patients that they must at once be revaccinated. Marvellous was the result of this ukase. Selina,

who, since she took to unauthorized systems of medicine, has poured scorn on vaccination as a disgusting and archaic superstition, not only was vaccinated herself, but caused a domestic revolution by insisting that all the servants should follow suit. Muggins, the dingy retainer, had been deeply pitted by the disease in infancy, but this availed him nothing against Selina's sanitary zeal; and the cook, who will never see sixty again, pleaded in vain the case, well known to her, of a young person at Friller's, the great dressmaker's, who "'ad such a harm through bein' done that it 'ad to be cut hoff above the elber."

Mr. Soulsby preached a mystical sermon on the Red Heifer, interpreting it as prophetic of that most beneficent boon of science which will be immortally associated with the name of Jenner; and fainted three times when subjected to the process. Mr. Barrington-Bounderley, laudably anxious to set a good example to his constituents, goes about with a red ribbon tied round the arm of his astrachan coat. Dr. Snuffin, whose horses have hitherto been a little touched in the wind or else afflicted with

string-halt, and were presumably bought cheap in consideration of those infirmities, has now broken out into a pair of steppers; and a grand piano has been seen going in at his drawing-room window.

Young Bumpstead "took" rather badly, and carries his left arm in a sling. Having been recommended by Snuffin to knock off work for a day or two, he spends most of his time in our dining-room, where his contests with Bertha at Ping-Pong are Homeric, and have led to betting. Bertha is a capital hand at all athletic exercises. She rides, rows, skates, swims, and cycles, has won the Loamshire Annual Prize for lawn-tennis, and captains a Girls' Golf-Club. When she is staying in Stuccovia she rather misses these accustomed exercises, and Ping-Pong is the only substitute which our resources provide. Selina, indeed, has a certain contempt for bodily prowess. She likes games which, as she says, "involve a little mind," and, when I seek to renew my youth by playing croquet, she professes that she can see nothing to admire in a fat man trying to squeeze a big ball through a narrow hoop, though, to be sure, it is better

than bowls. "My dear Robert, if you were such a goose as to stoop double directly after dinner, you would die no other death." That a bosom which harbours these sentiments should have melted towards Ping-Pong is, I am convinced, partly due to the influence of fashion. My Selina loves to keep abreast of what Soulsby calls "the great mundane movement." She has heard that Lord Salisbury and the Bishop of London played Ping-Pong when they met at Sandringham the other day, and (though she expressed a high-sniffing contempt for such nonsense when she first read it) I am persuaded that this paragraph from *Classy Cuttings* was not without its effect upon her mind. It has been suggested by unfriendly critics of the game that the language is ironical; but Selina, who has all the admirable gravity of her sex, takes it "at the foot of the letter."

"Conferences about political party matters, about the settlement of the Boer War, about education, and the housing of the working classes are no doubt all very well in their way. They may be useful, of course, and for those who are interested in such matters they

may have their importance. But the really momentous question of the day is, How can we best promote the interests of the great Ping-Pong movement? How can the game be most widely popularized? What can be done to add interest to it, and to bring the rules by which it is governed into closer harmony with the eternal principles of right and justice? Some of the greatest of living authorities, and many of the most gifted and accomplished players in the British Empire, have, I understand, been sitting in solemn conclave for the discussion of imperatively needed changes in the laws of the game, and anxiously debating proposals for some sort of national federation. It seems probable, therefore, that Ping-Pong is about to enter on a new phase of interest and importance, and that upper and middle-class society will have less time and attention to bestow on such troublesome and unpleasant matters as the South African War and the evils of the drink-trade."

Selina does not herself play Ping-Pong, though she is all in favour of it for the young and thoughtless. Her own brow wears

a preoccupied air, and there is that in her manner and bearing which assures me that her mind is big with solemn purposes.

Lord Beaconsfield, when he depicted the high-born damsels of Muriel Towers brushing their hair at night, broke off with the quaint *aposiopesis*,—"But we must not profane the mysteries of Bona Dea." I am much too cautious to commit myself to any original observations about woman's dress; but I am conscious of an impalpable feeling in the air which portends some startling development. Just a year ago, a loyal population was plunged into mourning; and, though Selina really looks her best in black, and was once told with amiable frankness by dear old Lady Farringford, that she "was a fright in yaller," I have for some time been aware that she was growing restive under the discipline of twelve months' sombreness. Bertha frankly revels in bright colours, and, if left to her own devices, would bedizen herself like a macaw. For my own part, these concerns do not touch me, as long as my womenkind confine their operations to Stuccovia; but occasionally our old friends of

"The County" or the world remember us, and then I have to escort my wife and sister-in-law into a more formidable society. I confess to anxious moments when I see the lost companions of my youth gazing critically at Selina's gown, or hear them whispering that Bertha isn't a bad-looking girl, but her clothes look as if they had come out of a rag-bag. Splendour we cannot attain; but a chaste sobriety of apparel is within our compass, and I dread experiments in millinery. Judge, therefore, of my consternation when I lately picked up a notice of Friller's Winter Sales, and found the following items marked with Selina's violet ink:—

"Navy Blue Serge Bolero, trimmed blue and white velvet, with large ermine sailor collar, skirt with box-pleated flounce, and strapped blue and white velvet.

"Red Faced Cloth Zouave, fancy strapping of own material, white embroidered cloth collar, facings and cuffs studded with quaint buttons, skirt strapped and studded to match coat.

"Mauve Shag Cloth Russian Blouse, collar and facings and cuffs of white cloth, with fancy braid box-pleated skirt.

"Duck's-egg Green Coat, faced velvet, and trimmed white braid, *slightly soiled.*

"Mauve Hopsac, strapped faced cloth, bolero and skirt stitched and tucked, lined through silk, slightly soiled; suitable for *short stout figure.*"

Well indeed is it for ardent youth that it cannot foresee its future. "Seek not to proticipate," is the wisest of warnings. On that long-distant night at the Loamshire Hunt Ball, when I first learned that I had proposed to Selina and had been accepted by her, I little thought that I should some day have to lead about a wife in a Navy Blue Bolero or a Shag Cloth Blouse; but even less that the developments of time would link me to a "short stout figure," in a "Mauve Hopsac," or a "Duck's-egg Green Coat, slightly soiled."

But, if these things are to be done—as I understand they are—in the light of day, far worse are the deeds of darkness. Under the heading of "Evening Dresses," I find that the violet ink has been alarmingly busy. Sympathetic crosses of approbation are prefixed to the succeeding items, while marks of inter-

rogation against the annexed prices indicate a characteristic determination to drive a bargain:—

"Pink Chiffon Princess Gown, bodice embroidered corals and pearls, handsomely trimmed lace, flowing overtrain. 20 gns.

"Black Point d'Esprit gown, baby bodice, trimmed jet and silver sequins, embroidered on cream panne, skirt with 18 net frills in front and wider at back, niched at waist. 18 gns.

"Pink Kilted Chiffon Princess Dress, with insertion of ecru lace, black lace applique, pin-boxed velvet poppies. 12 gns.

"White soft satin, with lace embroidered violets in baskets and pearls, embroidered sequins, straps of velvet, applique lace and velvet flowers, baby bodice embroidered jet and steel, with primula garniture. 25 gns."

Now if, as I surmise, some at least of these garments are intended for Bertha's wearing, I confess that I deplore the prospect. I cannot believe that the dear girl will look her best in "Pink Kilted Chiffon," even though it be enlivened by "pin-boxed velvet poppies." The object of Dress, I take it, is Marriage; and

that supreme end of woman will, I believe, be more readily attained by simpler methods. Bertha Topham-Sawyer in a well-cut habit, popping over the Loamshire fences, or tittupping along Rotten Row, is a spectacle as attractive as Die Vernon on her black hunter or Mary of Scotland on Rosabelle. In a homespun skirt and a red jacket, wielding a golf club or driving the "bung" at hockey, she is a figure that might inspire heroes, and is absolutely fatal to susceptible curates. But in a "baby bodice" and "flowing overtrain," "niched" at the waist, and garnished with primulas, she will, I fear, create a less felicitous impression.

It used, I believe, to be held by that section of English society to which Selina and I by birth belonged that "frippery was the ambition of a huckster's daughter"; but one cannot live twenty years in Stuccovia without imbibing something of its spirit. Evil communications with the Cashingtons and the Barrington-Bounderleys corrupt good manners; and I cannot help fancying that, in our narrow sphere, we are experiencing that "Americani-

zation of the World," on which Mr. Stead has just expended 164 pages of boisterous rhetoric. The American invasion has reached us through Lady Farringford; and here I must be understood as indicating the wife of the present peer. The dear old dowager remains unshaken in the convictions of her youth. To her, Americans are a set of people who talk through their noses, dine with their "helps," and drape the legs of their pianos; nor would either argument or eloquence move her from that sure anchorage. But, in spite of these prepossessions, her son, the present Lord Farringford, having partly ruined himself at Newmarket and completed the process at Monte Carlo, has repaired his shattered fortunes by marrying Miss Van Oof of New York, whose father made his millions by the famous "corner" in canvas-backed ducks. And the new Lady Farringford, being young, pretty, rich, and outspoken, has had a deserved success in London. Her intimacy in the highest quarters, reported in the society journals of New York, provoked from a friend of her youth the sarcastic exclamation, "What! Sally Van Oof sporting in the lap of

Royalty? You bet your last biscuit she'll roll off!" But the prophecy is not yet fulfilled. The dowager, who knows the market-value of social commodities as well as most of us, has conveniently forgotten her former sarcasms against Vanderbilts and Astors, and has given tea-parties in honour of her daughter-in-law. Contrary to my expectations, Selina has "taken immensely" to young Lady Farringford. Even Bertha thinks she is "rather a dear"; and she has conciliated parochial sympathy by pronouncing Mr. Soulsby "a lovely man." But she brings with her an atmosphere of worldliness which I perceive and deplore. Her taste in dress is flamboyant. Her habits of expenditure are difficult to keep pace with. She defies all the social proprieties in which Selina and I were nurtured. And yet she confidently reckons on being invited to the "Courts" which the King and Queen are to hold; and she has just carried off Bertha to Norfolk House to inspect the model of the robes in which she will flaunt at the Coronation. These are things which Selina's flesh and blood finds it hard to bear.

XIV

Those who have followed the short and simple annals of Stuccovia will perhaps remember the dexterous manœuvres by which my friend Barrington-Bounderley contrived to make himself M.P. for our borough, and the assiduous pains which he and his energetic wife took to retain the seat. At his original election he was opposed by a Social Democrat, who was afterwards convicted of cheating the Metropolitan Railway Company out of a threepenny fare; but this disinterested politician polled a mere handful of votes—for Stuccovian politics are eminently genteel — and since that contest Bounderley has been returned unopposed. Perhaps this absence of opposition has lulled our Member into a false security, and has relaxed the fibre of his interest in local affairs. Certainly he is less often seen in the chair at Smoking Concerts, and, when Bumpstead asked him to kick off at the first football-match of the

season against the Amalgamated Cabdrivers' Orphanage, he declined with an abruptness which caused the curate to ejaculate, "All right, old man, keep your hair on."

Mrs. Barrington-Bounderley has given up her *crêche*, and during 1901 attended only two committee-meetings of the local Association for Reforming Workhouse Bonnets.

There is a rumour in the district that some Companies with which our Member is or has been connected have not been very successful. Mrs. Bounderley's victoria seems to have gone into dock; and, though Mrs. Soulsby received the kindest imaginable letter in reply to her reminder about the parochial Christmas Tree, it enclosed a postal order for ten shillings instead of, as on former occasions, a cheque for two guineas.

Now it is not to be supposed that in a district like ours such changes can pass without unfavourable comment. Lady Farringford says, "I always told you that the man was an impostor. No living creature ever knew where he came from, and for my own part I never believed in his wife's money. I'm convinced that they've

been living beyond their means for years, and before long we shall see a crash." The dear old lady's bitterness is partly due to the fact that she lately went to call on Mrs. Bounderley, and found a tea-party raging, to which she had not been invited. "Not that I wanted to go to her shabby party, my dear," she said to Selina. "But I have no notion of people giving themselves such airs, and I was determined to let her know that I had found her out. So the next time I met her at Mrs. Soulsby's I said, "I came to call on you the other day, dear, but I saw by the look of the women who were going in that you had got a Mothers' Meeting or something of that kind going on. So, of course, I came away."

To be sure, Lady Farringford is incurably worldly, and would be by nature disposed to renounce the friendship of people whom she judged to be socially on the down grade. But I was surprised to hear Soulsby, who has always been severe on Mammon-worship and has habitually referred to money as "dross," insinuating mild depreciation of his friend and former Churchwarden. "I must confess that I am

disappointed in Bounderley. I fear he has missed his predestined perfection. His ideals seem to have lowered since he has been in Parliament. I feel there was an inconsistency in refusing to subscribe for the enlargement of the vestry, and yet taking twenty tickets for the Licensed Victuallers' Fancy Dress Ball. I trust I am not censorious, but these things jar."

When voices of depreciation are in the air it were strange if Selina did not join the chorus. "As for people's money-matters," she exclaims, with a fine elevation of tone, "I know nothing, and care less. But I must say I always thought your friend Mr. Bounderley one of the very vulgarest men I ever knew. He puts his elbows on to the table, and roars as if one was deaf, and is so odiously familiar. I should not be the least surprised to hear that he had cheated every one. As to his wife, she is not a bad little creature, and I am sincerely sorry for her—though certainly she once tried to patronize me, on the strength of her husband being in Parliament, which was too absurd. No, Robert, it's no good saying they used to be my greatest friends. It was merely political

It's all very well for you to laugh at politics, but there is such a thing as principle. Please remember that, though I am your wife, I am still a Topham-Sawyer, and that Papa sat for Loamshire for thirty years. As long as Mr. Bounderley is our Member I shall do my best to help him; but I confess I think it's high time we had a change, and if only you had played your cards properly you might have succeeded him. But it's so exactly like you —always throwing away every chance you ever had.

In the midst of these revilings it is a relief to hear Bertha say that Mrs. Bounderley is a very nice little woman, and has always been very kind to her; while Bumpstead, loyally following suit, protests that though old B.-B. cut up a bit rough about the kick-off, still he's a good old sport at bottom, and his cigars take a lot of beating.

This fidelity of youth to its early benefactors is always a pretty sight; but I cannot conceal from myself that Bertha and Bumpstead are in a minority. Beyond doubt, Bounderley's local popularity is waning. The "trend" is pointing

in another direction. It will be remembered that, just about the time when I began these jottings, an opulent couple called Mr. and Mrs. Cashington settled in Stuccovia. They bought a big corner house in Stucco Gardens, enlarged the stables, and built a billiard-room. They entertain hospitably and subscribe liberally. Their cook is above praise and their wine above suspicion.

Bounderley's extremity is Cashington's opportunity. Local sentiment is ripening for a change, and circumstances seem to indicate that the Hour and the Man have arrived.

Liberalism is a plant of slow growth in a Stuccovian bosom, and I am the sole representative in our district of the cause for which Hampden died on the field and Sidney on the scaffold. I am a Whig *pur sang*. My forefathers helped Henry VIII. to rob the Church, and Edward VI. to despoil the grammar-schools. They contrived to keep their possessions under Mary, and increased them under Elizabeth. They obtained their baronetcy from James I., deserted Charles I. at the psychological moment, lay low under the Commonwealth, hastened to

congratulate Charles II. on his return to Whitehall, plotted against James II., held office under William III., early discerned that the Stuarts had no chance of a second Restoration, became staunch supporters of the Hanoverian Succession, and, by judicious alliances with Levesons, and Howards, and Russells, obtained a place in that "Sacred Circle of the Great-Grandmotherhood" which acquired the title of the Whig party, and did so uncommonly well for itself between 1830 and 1885.

Every one who bears my name belongs to Brooks's and reads the *Edinburgh*. The head of my family, though of course he deserted the Liberal party at the crisis of 1886, still describes himself as "a Whig of 1688." I was trained to believe in the "Glorious and Immortal Memory of Mr. Fox," and at home on January 30 we used to drink "The Man in the Mask." Selina (who trudges through frost and snow to the Royal Martyr's Memorial Service at St. Margaret Pattens) denounces this toast as brutal and cowardly, and protests that "The Man who would have done it without a Mask" was a much finer character, for he at least had the courage of his convictions.

If I may for a moment speak egotistically, I believe that my sentiments are truly liberal in the best sense of the word; and when I settled in Stuccovia I willingly joined the local Liberal Association. But the atmosphere of the pot-house is disagreeable to me. I dissented from the philosophy of Mr. Bradlaugh. I had only an imperfect sympathy with the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws or the refusal of grants to the Royal Family; and, when the Chairman of the Association pronounced that "now the Grand Old Man is gone, our leader must be *Lebowcher*," I felt it was time to withdraw from an environment so eminently uncongenial to Whiggery.

But still my name is on the list of the Association, and I have lately been not a little gratified to find myself recognized as in some sense a leader of local politics. This compliment I have received from my neighbour Mr. Cashington. A few days ago he sent me a brief but courteous note, requesting the favour of a private conversation with me on a matter of urgent business. This I graciously accorded, and my visitor came to the point with com-

mendable promptitude. He said, "There's no good in beating about the bush, and I may as well say plainly that I am thinking of standing for this borough; and I have come to you because I should like to be supported by a gentleman. You may take it from me that Bounderley won't stand next time—indeed, he may be off before the General Election. He has got into some very queer things in the City; and, even if he ventured to face the music he wouldn't get in again. He can't afford to 'part' as freely as he used. Soulsby has quarrelled with him for voting for the Deceased Wife's Sister the other day; and the publicans have discovered that he sent a donation on the sly to the Church of England Temperance Society. In short, he's pretty well found out; and I have a great notion that a strong Liberal candidate could carry the seat. Now, for my own part I am a Liberal Imperialist. Rosebery is the man for my money. He is an old friend of mine. I wasn't actually at Eton with him, because my governor changed his mind at the last moment and sent me to Merchant Taylors'; but I came across him a good

deal at Oxford. No, I wasn't at Christ Church; our family college was Pembroke. But I've often seen Rosebery—he was Dalmeny then—coming out of Tom Gate; and one Fifth of November I did him a good turn in a row on Folly Bridge. By Jove! he never forgot it. When I went up to him at the City Liberal Club and said that my name was Cashington, he remembered me at once. We got on to politics directly. He said, 'No man ever was in such a peculiar position as I am. I wrote a letter to explain why I couldn't speak, and now I must make a speech to explain what I meant by my letter.' I said, 'You needn't explain yourself to me. I'm with you, heart and soul. Salisbury is played out. Home Rule is dead and buried. Those sneaking Armenians deserve all they get; and the war's just about the best biz. that has happened in our time. Go on with your furrow; and, by jingo, you won't find yourself alone when you reach the end.'

"I saw at a glance that he was impressed. It's wonderful how quick he is at picking up a point. I dined in Berkeley Square three days afterwards. There were a lot of pressmen at dinner,

and it was simply a marvel to see how Rosebery had the whole conversation to himself; the other fellows never opened their mouths except to eat and drink. It is *glamour*, that's what it is —*glamour*, and, if we could only get him to address the Liberal Association here, we should win hands down.

"Oh yes, the Association is all right. It is run by the Secretary, and an extra fiver to his salary will make everything square. He doesn't get much as it is, poor beggar; and he's quite sharp enough to know where the money-bags are."

Thus Mr. Cashington; and his discourse gave, as the French say, furiously to think. Should I, having so long abandoned politics, return to my earlier activities? Should I unfurl the Whig banner of buff and blue, and wave it over the head of Imperial Cashington? If I undertook any responsibilities in connexion with the contest, should I have to subscribe to the registration-expenses? should I have to read the *Daily Mail?* and, above all, what would Selina say? Chewing the food of these sweet and bitter fancies, I declined to commit myself to Mr.

Cashington's cause; but he shook hands with me effusively, and rushed off to keep an appointment with Sir Wemyss Reid at the chambers of Dr. Heber Hart.[1] Meanwhile, I laid the project, with an air of easy indifference, before Selina, who, to my great astonishment, did not instantly condemn it as at once unpatriotic and expensive. She said that, for her own part, she did not care a jot for Mr. Bounderley. She could see no difference between his Tory Democratic opinions and the Liberal Imperialist creed of Mr. Cashington. On social grounds there was not a pin to choose between them; and, although it was vulgarity itself to think of money in connexion with politics, it certainly would be disagreeable to find that the Member for whom one had slaved was a bankrupt. On the whole, Selina thought she should drop political work for a time. The subscriptions were endless, and she was no longer equal to trapesing about in dog-days and blizzards, trying to secure votes for a candidate who, when he was returned, was barely civil.

[1] There must be some inaccuracy here. Sir W. R. informs us that he has no acquaintance with Dr. H. H.—ED.

In my private opinion, the fact that my family had always been Whigs, and had sometimes contested Loamshire with bygone Topham-Sawyers, was not without its effect on Selina. Though, or because, she is a Conservative, she has a high respect for hereditary principles, even though they be those of 1688; and there was something agreeable to her territorial instincts in the thought that the proletariat of Stuccovia should look for guidance to her husband. "At any rate, it shows that they know who you are; and, after all is said and done, people do like being led by a gentleman."

So, after full consideration, I informed Mr. Cashington that I would propose his adoption as Liberal candidate for the borough; and perhaps my readiness to do so coexisted with a strong conviction that he would not win. Of electioneering one may say, as Napoleon said of war, "Eh, bien! C'est un grand jeu—belle occupation." Selina warned me emphatically against letting myself be induced to give money to the cause. "Your name is quite as much as they have any right to ask, and people who are as ostentatious as the Cashingtons ought to

be able to pay their own election expenses." Bertha, always loyal to old friends, said that I was treating Bounderley very shabbily. She would have worked enthusiastically for a pro-Boer, and would have got Canon Scott Holland down to speak for a member of the C.S.U.; but Mr. Cashington seemed every bit as much a Tory as Mr. Bounderley, though certainly he used longer words. Thus led, Bumpstead volunteered his opinion that Cashington was a wrong 'un; that, even if he didn't bolt off the course, he would never run straight; and that, before the show was over, we should find that we had been "had."

Undeterred by this warning, I plunged into the fray. The first step was to call a meeting of the Liberal Association to hear an address from Mr. Cashington, and, if his opinions proved acceptable, to adopt him as our candidate at the next election. We met in a small committee-room at the back of the Parochial Hall, and I was voted into the chair. I presided over a meeting composed of the Wesleyan, Baptist, and Congregationalist ministers; an exceedingly raw-boned Scotch youth from the Presby-

terian Church; a milkman, a grocer, and a butcher who had experienced some difficulty in getting their accounts settled by Mr. Bounderley; a tipsy tailor, who was locally reputed to beat his wife; and a discharged schoolmaster with a grievance against the Education Department. The Secretary (who wore blue spectacles and a tweed cap, black trousers, and brown boots) read a letter from the Liberal Headquarters, which I am not at liberty to disclose; and handed up the following Resolutions, which, after an oration by Mr. Cashington, were moved, seconded, and carried unanimously: (i.) That this meeting enthusiastically recognizes Lord Rosebery's condescension in returning to public life; endorses his repudiation of Mr. Gladstone's policy; and assures him that he is the inevitable Prime Minister of our free, tolerant, and unaggressive Empire. (ii.) That this meeting, having heard the address of Charles Cornelius Cashington, Esquire, and having learnt with satisfaction that he approves of the South African War, and is opposed to Local Option, Home Rule, Free Trade, and Disestablishment, cordially adopts him as Liberal candidate for this Borough at

the next election, and pledges itself to use all legitimate means to secure his return.

So far, all was well; but, after all, it is only the first step, and what is to come next I do not exactly see. The figures of the last contest seem to show that the electorate of Stuccovia comprises 9000 Tories and 1000 Liberals, Radicals, and Socialists. Whether, out of these discordant elements, Cashington can construct a Third Party of Liberal Imperialists remains to be seen. But he clings desperately to the idea that Lord Salisbury is to resign immediately after the Coronation, and that, in the ensuing confusion, the Ploughman of Berkeley Square will come by his own.

XV

I AM having an unusually pleasant Lent. There is a perceptible mitigation in that fury of church-going which in former years has seized Selina at this season. We no longer have High Tea on Wednesday and Friday, and I am not dragged off in a ricketty four-wheeler to abnormal devotions at St. Alban's or St. Barnabas. Selina, who thinks increasingly of her health, declares her conscientious conviction that to keep well is the first duty of a Christian, and that to have one's dinner in peace is really a much more religious act than to ruin one's digestion and catch endless colds by "trampolining" away to churches a hundred miles off. In the substance, if not in the form, of this sentiment I seem to recognize an echo from my former self; but Selina has worked herself into believing that I and not she was responsible for those Lenten irregularities.

Meanwhile the excellent Soulsby is putting forth unusual exertions. On Ash Wednesday he announced to his congregation that, rightly considered, Lent was not so much a Fast as a Feast—yes, a Feast of Fat Things—oh yes! a Banquet of Spiritual Delights. These delicacies are this year mainly provided by his own skill. He finds (as he tells us, with a modest pride which is peculiarly winning) that strangers, though incomparably greater than he—deeper theologians, more arousing orators—yet cannot feel the pulse of the St. Ursula's congregation quite as accurately as one who has lived and loved and laboured in our midst for more than two long decades. Accordingly he is taking all the Lent sermons himself, with only very occasional aid from my old friend Jim Jawkins, whose chief delight is to escape from Loamshire and wag his head in a metropolitan pulpit. On Sunday mornings Soulsby is giving us a course of sermons on the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy. Last Sunday he enforced the duty of feeding the hungry with almost exaggerated earnestness. This emphasis rather nettled Selina, who re-

marked as we were walking home that if having Mr. Bumpstead to supper Sunday after Sunday wasn't "feeding the hungry" she didn't know what was, and that it would be more to the point if Mr. Soulsby would preach on the Seven Deadly Sins, and give his curate a hint about gluttony. I confess I thought this outburst a little unfair on Bumpstead, who certainly works hard for his victuals, and is fully justified in "doing himself honourably" (the phrase is his own) when the faithful entertain him. Nor do I think that Selina would have expressed herself with quite so much vivacity if Bertha had been with us; but the dear girl had just popped in to see Mrs. Soulsby, who is recovering from a domestic crisis. Well may poor Soulsby say, with picturesque emotion, "The blessings of the man who hath his quiver full of them are mine in rich abundance."

So marked is the abatement of Selina's zeal for the Church, its ministers, and its ministrations, that, did I not know her principles to be firmly grounded, I might begin to feel a little uneasiness. Experience has taught me to avoid unnecessary questions, but I main-

tain a lifelong habit of observation and form my own conclusions. In the small "third room" on the drawing-room floor, which she calls her boudoir—a snug apartment consisting of two windows, a door, and a fireplace—I occasionally cast my eye on the current literature which my womankind affect. There I find *The Queen*, *The World*, *Classy Cuttings*, and the *St. Ursula's Parish Magazine*, which are my Selina's oracles; and *The Table-Tennis and Pastimes Pioneer*, which Bertha takes. This journal announces as its aim "to advance the best interests of a popular game, and to secure for it its rightful place among those international sports which have so great a bearing upon the building up of Great Empires." There I learn that at the Second Ping-Pong Tournament at Queen's Hall "long rallies in a spirited encounter between Miss Florence Lacy and Mrs. Alfred drew loud applause yesterday afternoon, while much enthusiasm was also evoked by Miss Violet Farr's cruel smashes, Miss Lily Weisberg's demon deliveries, and Miss Helena Maude Smith's back-hand returns." Such is the literature, "lambent yet innocuous," which

delights my wife and her sister; but great was my consternation when the other day I found added to the collection a pamphlet entitled *The Wonders of Thought-Force*. The title startled me. Since she was vaccinated, Selina has lost all fear of small-pox, declares that she was a goose for giving in to Dr. Snuffin's nonsense, and affirms her belief that, if people would only set to work the right way, they could be perfectly healthy without any doctor's abominations. True it is that Grape-nuts have proved a failure, and the Salisbury Treatment has palled; but I am not free from apprehension that she is turning her mind in directions even less compatible with orthodoxy. This I trace to the influence of young Lady Farringford (*née* Sally Van Oof), who, I feel certain, has given her the pamphlet on "Thought-Force," setting forth the miraculous cures of physical and mental ailments effected by Helen Wilmans Post, Sea Breeze, Florida, U.S.A.

From that pamphlet I cull two or three quotations—"racy," as Pennialinus would say, of the Great Republic—and of that "high faith" which Mr. Lowell commended.

"John M. White, North Wales, Pa., S.S.—Mrs. Wilmans Post,—I most cheerfully give you my testimonial of the great good you have done me by your absent treatment. Five years ago I was a physical wreck beyond the reach of the best medical doctors, as five years of experience proved. I went to the best doctors to be found here and in Philadelphia, and as a last resort I went before a clinic of doctors and the late Prof. Pepper, at the University of Pennsylvania, and they all pronounced my case incurable, as they said the stomach *was gone;* therefore nothing to build on; then I gave up in despair until I found one of your circulars, and, like a drowning man, grasped it, and I bless the event ever since, for you built me up beyond my hopes—yes, saved my life. To-day my stomach can digest almost any kind of food, and I am in high hope of being a stronger man than ever I was. As you know, my case was a desperate one, and I had lost all interest in life.

"Ermine J. King, 318 York Ave., Chicago, Ill., S.S.—To whom it may concern,—I have for the last five months been receiving absent treatments from Helen Wilmans Post, for ailments

which the medical profession could not reach, and I have received great benefit from the same, and I believe that Mrs. Wilmans Post is doing a great good through the power of her kindly, uplifting thought. She is a true healer in every sense of the word, and the treatments are well worth the modest sum which she accepts for them.

"Mary C. Wiley, Columbia, S.C., S.S.—Mrs. Wilmans Post,—I am so glad that I can say I am better of my nervousness and weakness. I think your treatment the most wonderful thing! I study daily to learn more about it. I don't think another dose of medicine will ever pass my lips. All your reasoning is so natural and good. The truth proves as I never saw it before. How can any one doubt when you prove everything? I assure you I watch you with a jealous eye—have seen nothing but your wonderful truth and love.

"Mrs. B. C. Copeland, Evansville, Ind., S.S.—I can truly say that I have been successfully treated and *cured* by you of diseases that the old-school doctors have failed to cure, and even went so far as to say I could *not* be

cured. I am now almost 72 years of age and am feeling well, and can stand more work than the generality of younger people, and people who do not know me take me to be about fifty years of age. And in truth I must give the power of your mind the honour and credit of all my good health and youthful appearance. Ten years ago I was a perfect wreck—could not walk any distance without stopping for breath and strength. I now can walk miles with comparative ease.

"Mrs. Jane Walker, Petrolia, Cal.—Many disorders: Weak lungs, diseased bronchial tubes. Has been benefited beyond any power of medical aid. Is still improving. Thinks Mrs. Helen Wilmans Post stands first in the ranks of the magnanimous, and ahead in the world of advanced thought."

On the attractions of this system it were superfluous to enlarge. To have one's stomach restored to one after it was "gone"; to be able to digest "almost any kind of food"; never to need another dose of medicine; and to look fifty when one is really seventy-two, these are boons not lightly to be esteemed. But

what most attracted the pensive taxpayer, over whom an impending War-Budget begins to cast its shadow, is Helen Wilmans Post's treatise on "The Conquest of Poverty." Of this its gifted authoress boasts, and probably with justice, that it is "the most popular book in the range of Mental Science literature. It brings freedom to the mind, and through the mind to the body." With a steadily decreasing income, and an expenditure pitched high enough to satisfy the social demands of Stuccovia, that were, indeed, a freedom devoutly to be wished, but not, I fear, to be attained.

As far as I can judge, none of these erroneous and strange doctrines have produced the slightest effect on Bertha. Indeed, that excellent girl has no inconsiderable share of the high and spirited perverseness which characterizes the whole house of Topham-Sawyer. As Selina's zeal for Lenten church-going diminishes, Bertha's increases. As Selina hankers more and more after new and heterodox teachings, Bertha developes her bump of orthodoxy, and, encouraged by Bumpstead, wages remorseless

war against heresy and schism. The local papers have lately reported a sermon preached at the "Presbyterian Church of England" in Stucco Road by Mr. Ramshorn—the raw-boned young minister who supported me at Cashington's meeting last month. This youth, who was reared at North Berwick, thus effectively drew upon the memories of his youth[1]: "I am sure if you have ever paid any attention to the game you will be struck by the way in which the game of golf seems to reproduce the common scenes of life. Those of you who don't play may know that the great object is to put the little white ball into the little hole. And so long as you are short of that, if you don't do it—well, the other man does it before you. He has won the hole. And in doing this, when you come to what is called the 'putting-green,' and you take your putt—it may be a beautiful putt, it may run straight for the hole, but if it stops short you will say to yourself, and your partner will say to you, 'Never up; never in. It is a beauty, but it

[1] The subjoined extract is taken from a religious newspaper.—ED.

wants legs.' And that is just exactly the situation here — 'not far from the Kingdom.' You may be 'lying dead' as we say. The next shot is sure to do it. 'Never up; never in.'"

Bertha, herself no mean proficient with the club, stigmatized this illustration from one of her favourite games as absolutely profane; and sarcastically supposed that Mr. Ramshorn would soon be trying to get a spiritual meaning out of Ping-Pong. Bumpstead chimed in, saying that that kind of thing was well enough for the old Vicar, because he's a mystic and a thinker, and all that sort of game; but when that copper-topped rotter from the Presbyterian shop went in for it, it was getting a bit too thick, and next time they met he'd give young Ramshorn a bit of his mind. The mention of the Presbyterian Church in Stucco Road reminds me of Miss Scrimgeour, the Scotch lady who a few months ago was distributing rhymed leaflets against "The Coming of the Monks." She has been on her rounds again quite lately, and created not a little emotion at the Vicarage by dropping into the letter-box the following statement, which, being inscribed "To H. H. H.,

in grateful recognition of his brotherly advances," would seem to embody the reply of the "Free Churches" to the overtures of the Establishment:—

"WHY I AM NOT A CHURCHMAN!

"Because the Triple Ecclesiastical Apostasy, made up of the Roman, Greek, and Anglican hierarchies, though claiming to be the true church, is nothing better than the manufacture of a man-made, and self-styled priesthood, whose object is by patronizing the masses, and flattering the classes, to obtain political power, personal advantage, social prestige, public money, and control of the human conscience.

"They, however, clearly prove the fraud and fallacy of their pretensions, by reversing the order and use of the Old and New Testaments, assuming by gorgeous ceremonial displays, in semi-pagan imitation of Jewish worship, to set forth the glorious gospel. Thus do they endeavour to entangle us in a yoke of bondage.

"*What would be thought of a man who, investigating the beauties of some priceless gem, persisted in using a brick, or a frying-pan,*

for an eyeglass?[1] Surely he would display the folly of a fool! yet are the wise of this world, who judge by the light of their own eyes, more foolish than he; when they attempt to read the Word of God, through the deceptive and obscuring optics of a formula of traditional canons, creeds, and catechisms, which have their origin in the corruptions of the dark ages of mediævalism, when—

> 'Monks and Friars (rogues and liars)
> Martyred faithful men,
> And had they power, they'd light the fires,
> And do the same again.'"

While my womankind are thus absorbed in the high things of Science and Theology I have been taking a turn at Politics, which Bacon pronounced to be "of all pursuits the most immersed in matter." And if by "matter" Bacon meant that particular form of matter which we call money, my experience quite tallies with his. The Primrose League, once a flourishing feature in the life of Stuccovia, has been voted a nuisance on account of the exactions which it levied. Poor Bounderley can

[1] The italics are ours.—ED.

no longer send indiscriminate cheques to all who apply, but has to pick and choose, and thereby has made enemies and lost his popularity. A temporary difficulty in getting their little accounts settled by the Tory M.P. has kindled a flame of Liberalism among the local tradesmen, to whom Mr. Lloyd-George's most inflammatory rhetoric would have appealed in vain. Cashington for the moment carries all before him by dint of his brougham and his billiard-room, his wife's sables and son's chargers. "There's money in the thing," says the Liberal agent to his friend the Solicitor's clerk; "only work it properly, and we're on velvet. Start a branch of the Liberal League. Make Rosebery President. Get Fowler down to blackguard Home Rule, and Grey to show up Free Trade, and the trick's done. Out goes Bounderley; enter Cashington; and, if I know my man, he means winning the seat, and keeping it—and that means spending money, my boy, or you and I don't know our business."

I had written so far when an event occurred which knocked me, as the phrase is, all of a

heap. I could not honestly affirm that it was wholly unexpected, and yet, as people say when their friends die after lingering illnesses, it was "sudden at the last."

Those who have the happiness to dwell in London will recollect that the evening of Thursday, 6th March 1902, was signalized by a fog which would have been thick for mid-winter.

Thursday is the evening when a Social Entertainment is always given at the Parochial Club. This entertainment is not intermitted in Lent, for Soulsby says that he would not impose on the youth of his flock a yoke which he at their age would have found grievous. "Nay, my spiritual children shall not say in the dim hereafter that St. Ursula was a hard task-mistress, or their religion a thing of austerity and gloom." So on Thursday evening the Club always provides a Variety Entertainment. Soulsby recites, Bumpstead boxes, Bertha sings, and Mrs. Soulsby (when she is strong enough) plays the concertina. Cashington, who has suddenly developed a keen interest in our parochial life, has given us two lectures, on "Imperial Expansion" and "A Protest against

Gladstonianism"; and Bounderley, not to be outdone by his rival, has promised a Comic Sketch of the House of Commons, with Imitations of Lord Percy and Lord Hugh Cecil obstructing the Deceased Wife's Sister.

On the evening of 6th March, Bertha was engaged to sing, "No, Sir," and "Drink, Puppy, drink." She arrived under Selina's wing just before the boxing was over; and though, as a rule, "Blazer" Bumpstead can take uncommonly good care of himself in a physical encounter, he was at that instant felled to the earth by a converted coal-heaver, whose recent adhesion to the Club had been regarded as a beautiful result of Soulsby's Lenten eloquence. At this unexpected sight, Bertha grasped her sister's arm, and exclaimed in a voice made tremulous by emotion, "Oh, Selina! dear Mr. Bumpstead will be killed!" It is true that when, a few minutes afterwards, that hero came up grinning and expressed himself as gratified by the epithet, Bertha modestly altered the punctuation of her sympathy, and declared that she had said, "Oh, Selina dear! Mr. Bumpstead will be killed!" But the good young man had heard the original

version, and governed himself accordingly. On emerging from the Club at the conclusion of the entertainment, we found Stuccovia wrapped in a thick blanket of yellow fog. Selina hung on to me like grim death, bitterly reproaching me for having dragged her out in such a frightful night (which, it is needless to say, I had never done), while Bumpstead and Bertha disappeared together into the surrounding gloom. They emerged from it engaged. Our labours for our sister have not been in vain. Stuccovia has been fruitful while Loamshire was barren. Bertha will some day reign at Foxholes. Dear old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer will go down to her grave happy in the knowledge that though her daughter is not marrying into *the* County, at least she is marrying into *a* County. Selina is unexpectedly enthusiastic, and Bumpstead keeps on murmuring, in a kind of rapturous chuckle, "Good Old Fog."

XVI

THE course of true love never did run smooth; and, though Bumpstead and Bertha emerged safely from the fog, I fear that they will have to encounter a good many shoals and breakers and contrary winds before they touch the desired shore of matrimony.

I am happy to say that none of the difficulties which seem to threaten their course have originated in Stuccovia. It is true that Selina, when fatigued or worried, has been known to declare that I am a mass of selfishness; but I do not carry that amiable trait of my sex so far as to begrudge Bertha her happiness merely because I shall miss her company. She has been an exhilarating element in our rather hum-drum existence; but, from my experience in like cases, I anticipate that the dear girl will contrive to see a good deal of us even after she is married; and in the meantime she and Bumpstead (whom I am learning to call

Jack) have the house pretty much to themselves. The enamoured swain tells us that, Lent being over, he is not so much "bunged up" with parochial engagements as was the case in March; and he is able to give us a great deal of his society. At meal-times he presents himself with touching regularity, even sometimes dropping in for a breakfast-cup of coffee and a slice of ham on his way back from early service; and, after his boxing night at the club, smoking his pipe in my study till untimely hours. Selina's "boudoir" is entirely made over to the interesting couple; and it is not safe even to enter the drawing-room without a good deal of circumspection and a preliminary cough. Over all these pastoral friskings Selina smiles serenely. She has honestly done her best for her sister. The supreme end of woman's existence has been attained; and she regards with complacency the triumph of her skill.

The Parish is enthusiastic about the engagement. Soulsby lays his delicate hand on Bumpstead's brawny shoulder, and murmurs, "May she be to you all that my Egeria has been to me. And oh! could I give you a fonder

benison than that?" Old Lady Farringford, who, even in her decadence, still wields some social authority among us, lays great stress on Bumpstead's territorial connexions. "The Bumpsteads are an excellent family. Indeed, they are cousins of ours. One of Lord Farringford's great-aunts married the Bumpstead of the period. I believe they are Saxon by descent, like the Lowthers and the Tollemaches. I remember there was a rhyme about it, which they were very fond of repeating—

"Before the Norman into England came,
Foxholes was my seat and Bumpstead was my name."

The Cashingtons, more modern though not more worldly than the dowager, display a keen curiosity about the settlements, and wonder who will pay for the *trousseau*. Bounderley comports himself with characteristic heartiness; smacks Bumpstead on the back, and says, "Well done, my son, I'm proud of you! There's no flummery betwixt me and you. I know you and you know me; and I tell you you've pulled off a good thing this journey, and no error. You simply meant doing it, and went in, and won. It's just what I did myself; and I like you all

the better for it." The members of the Parochial Club are getting up an illuminated address to "the Rev. John Thomas Bumpstead, M.A., in grateful recognition of his unwearied interest in our athletic development;" and the Fishers in Deep Waters are combining to present Bertha with a waterproof cloak and a bound series of *The Commonwealth.*

Unfortunately, in this chorus of congratulation one false note has been struck. Some anonymous friend has sent Bertha a copy, facetiously marked with red ink in telling places, of a treatise on the *Art of Beauty.* This treatise, though adapted to the needs of London, seems to have originated in New York. It opens with an address to the reader, and goes on to deal in detail with physical imperfections and the method of remedying them. Let me quote some of the marked passages:—

"Dear Madame or Sir,—The object of this little booklet is to direct the attention of the reader to the many and varied imperfections of the face with which we are apt to be endowed, and to call your attention to the fact that there is in this vast Metropolis a place where relief may be found.

THE EARS

"If the ears are large, ill-shaped, or deformed in any way, they are soon changed to a perfected state. All irregularities and deformities are painlessly, permanently, and successfully corrected, thereby rendering the features symmetrical, harmonious, and expressive.

THE NOSE

"As Shakespeare says, 'A good nose is requisite.' No other feature of the face bears such a relation to what is known as beauty, and no other feature is as helpful or as fatal to man's comeliness.

"Few persons can boast a perfect nose. This being so, it will interest many to know that this prominent feature of the face may be improved where it is imperfect. Everybody is familiar with the various types of noses, and may see many of each during a stroll on any of our thoroughfares. Some are repugnant, others pleasing, but all give some determining character, either sympathetic or forbidding, to the face.

"Many a countenance, otherwise admirable, is ruined to the eye by the form of the nose, and it is often remarked that such or such a person would be 'good-looking' were it not for his or her nose.

"Many are of the opinion that the nose Nature has given, or the one that accident has deformed, is beyond remedy. This is an error, for, when one reflects upon the fact that the nose is greatly com-

posed of cartilage, it will be admitted that few things are easier than giving it direction of form.

"Of noses there are six well-defined classes:—

Class I.—The Roman, or Aquiline Nose.
,, II.—The Greek, or Straight Nose.
,, III.—The Cogitative, or Wide-nostrilled Nose.
,, IV.—The Jewish, or Hawk Nose.
,, V.—The Snub Nose.
,, VI.—The Celestial, or Turn-up Nose.

Between these there are infinite crosses and intermixtures, which at first are apt to embarrass one, but after a little practice one is soon able to distinguish with tolerable precision.

"Class I.—The Roman, or Aquiline Nose, is rather convex, but undulating, as its name aquiline imports. It is usually rugose and coarse, but, when otherwise, it approaches the Greek nose, and the classification is materially altered.

"Class II.—The Greek, or Straight Nose, is *perfectly* straight; any deviation from the right line must be strictly noticed. If the deviation tend to convexity it approaches the Roman type and its true character is marred. On the other hand, when the deviation is towards concavity, it partakes of the Celestial, and its true character is lost. It should be fine and well chiselled, but not sharp. It is the highest and most beautiful form which the organ can assume.

"Class III.—The Cogitative, or Wide-nostrilled

Nose, is, as its secondary name imports, wide at the end, thick and broad, *gradually* widening from below the bridge. This is the type of nose that usually become bulbous or clubbed, owing to a glandular degeneration, and is a marked disfigurement. The Cogitative Nose is usually associated with Classes I. and II., rarely with IV., and still less seldom with V. and VI.

"Class IV.—The Jewish, or Hawk Nose, is very convex, and preserves its convexity like a bow throughout the whole length, from the eyes to the tip. It is thin and sharp.

"Classes V. and VI.—The Snub Nose and the Turn-up Nose, *poeticé* Celestial Nose.—The form of the former is sufficiently indicated by its name; the latter is distinguished by its presenting a continuous concavity from the eyes to the tip. It is converse in shape to the Jewish nose.

"*If your nose is Roman and you would have it Grecian, it can be changed to conform with your idea of shape. If pugged, it can be lowered; if drooping, or hawk-billed, it can be given true angles; if crooked, it can be straightened; if depressed, it can be raised. In other words, if it does not please you, it can be remedied to do so, painlessly and quickly, by the most modern and scientific means known to specialists.*"

When Selina chanced to find this seductive treatise lying on the writing-table, her just indignation knew no bounds. She declares

that the perpetrator of the outrage is young Lady Farringford (*née* Sally Van Oof), and that it's exactly like her, with her American notions of "what *she* calls fun and *I* call vulgarity." Certainly the treatise seems a little personal, for Bertha's nose is inclined to be "tip-tilted" or "celestial," and Jack Bumpstead's, though I should not call it "cogitative," might fairly be described as "clubbed." But Bertha has sense enough to be amused; and Bumpstead, though not dangerously quick at seeing a joke, opines that "one of Bertha's pals has been getting at her, and that it's not bad chaff, if you look at it the right way."

But, while I am treading these primrose-paths of dalliance, I am forgetting the more serious matters which lie far afield from Stuccovia. The announcement of Bertha's engagement was very ungraciously received at The Sawpits. Old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer, indeed, is devoutly thankful to have got her youngest daughter off her hands; and though, as she justly observes, Hampshire is not Loamshire, still Bumpstead is a good name, and Foxholes,

though not large, is quite a nice "thing," and near Stratton, which will be pleasant for Bertha, for her dear father was a great friend of Lord Northbrook's in "those days."

But Tom Topham-Sawyer makes himself, as his manner is, very disagreeable. He protests that a decent-looking girl like Bertha might have done better than chuck herself away on a parson; pooh-poohs the acreage of Foxholes; and pronounces that old Bumpstead is good for another thirty years—which, as he was born in 1840 and the Bumpsteads are notoriously long-lived, is painfully possible. However, Tom Topham-Sawyer has of course no say in the matter; and his imperfect sympathy with the project is probably due to the fact that he thinks he may have to give the wedding-breakfast, or may even be expected to make some small addition to his sister's exiguous fortune.

Far more serious is the hostility of old Mr. Bumpstead. He has been up to London to talk things over with Selina and me, and has shown a very unaccommodating disposition. He is a man of burly frame, resolute countenance, and uncompromising address. He pro-

tests that he has no idea of young fellows marrying the moment they grow up, and expecting their fathers to keep them. "Of course, when I drop, Jack will step into my place. But I don't take my boots off before I go to bed; and there are my six daughters to be thought of. Besides, though I have no immediate intention of marrying again, I must reserve my perfect freedom. The long and short of it is that I don't see how it's to be managed. I've told my son that I think him a young fool for his pains, and the best thing you can do is to tell your sister-in-law the same."

Good Mr. Bumpstead, like all the squires I have ever known, seemed very much accustomed to having it all his own way, and to speaking his mind without let or hindrance. But in making this very unflattering allocution he reckoned without Selina, who is a complete stranger to subserviency, and now joined issue with considerable vivacity. While my more cautious mind was revolving conciliatory tactics, she observed that, for her own part, she had no notion of any one playing fast and loose

with her sister's affections. She considered that Mr. John Bumpstead was fully old enough to know his own mind, and she should certainly counsel him not to submit to any interference in a matter which concerned his own happiness alone. Her sister's merits she declined to discuss; but this much she would say—that if Mr. Bumpstead fancied that he could secure a nicer, better-principled, better-looking daughter-in-law, she thought he would find himself mistaken. *No one*, of course, would be so absurd as to suggest any difficulties on the score of *birth* or *position;* and, as for money, she was thankful to say that in her family they were not mercenary, and that John and Bertha could put together quite enough to live upon *until they succeeded to Foxholes.*

This vigorous address, delivered with a great deal of emphasis on the words italicized, and with complete indifference to that divinity which doth hedge a squire, produced a marked effect on Mr. Bumpstead, who gasped stertorously, and began to mutter something in the way of apology or explanation; but Selina cut him short. "Not at all. No apology is neces-

sary. I perfectly understand your anxiety for your son's happiness. I only thought it right to let you know plainly that in my opinion his happiness will be best secured by the marriage which he has been wise enough to propose. Of course, I must leave you to settle all the business part of it with my husband and my brother, who are Bertha's trustees; but the dear child's happiness is *my* care."

After this rather uncomfortable scene, I sought an interview with Jack Bumpstead, who must no longer be called "Blazer." For Selina says, with her usual pungency, "I believe your treating him like a schoolboy and calling him by that silly nickname is just the reason why that absurd old father of his thinks he can do what he likes with him. Well, thank goodness, he can't do what he likes with Bertha and me; and I flatter myself that I opened his eyes in that particular, though I confess I thought *your* attitude was even weaker than I expected. You really have no moral courage, or you wouldn't leave all these things to me."

Jack Bumpstead took the whole affair with

what is called "philosophic calm," but is really a placidity far more profound than I ever encountered in a philosopher. He said, with easy indifference to metaphor, "Oh, that's all right. The Gov. was bound to be a bit shirty at first; but when he's had time to blow off the steam he'll come round, and we shall be as right as rain. You see, he's a bit sick at my being a parson. It was right enough when my eldest brother was alive; but, when the poor chap got carried off by that beastly Indian fever, the Old Boy didn't half see the fun of Foxholes going to the Cloth. He's too much of a gentleman to want me to chuck; and, besides, if he did, I'd see him further first. But of course he'd like to see me in a more paying job than a curacy, or else to marry a girl who's got the stuff. But that ain't my line of country. I've got the girl I wanted, and I mean to stick to her. She's 'Miss Wright' and no mistake. By Jove, that *was* a fog!"

So far, I have dealt exclusively with private concerns; but a statesman's time belongs to his country; and even a mere politician ought, at a season of national peril, to be thinking more

of constituencies and candidates than of sisters-in-law and settlements. So, cheered by Jack Bumpstead's easy-going optimism, I left him to arrange matters with his obstructive parent; and took up the thread of Stuccovian politics, which the sudden inrush of domestic excitement had caused me to drop. What recalled me to a sense of my public duty was the receipt of a circular note signed by all the ministers of the Evangelical Free Churches in the Stuccovian area. This document was issued on the morning after the Government's Education Bill appeared. It announced that we had reached a Crisis in the History of Religious Freedom, and implored all who were opposed to Priestcraft, Fraud, and Oppression to join in a vigorous and practical protest against the latest development of Cecilism.

In response to this alarum, an "emergency meeting" of the local Liberal Association was hastily summoned, and I was voted into the chair. Having briefly introduced the subject, I invited suggestions as to the best method of meeting this insidious attack upon our most cherished liberties; but no sooner had I done

so than the fissiparous nature of Liberalism became once again apparent. The debate was opened by an enthusiastic young acolyte from St. Ursula's, who professed himself a follower of that staunch democrat, Mr. Stewart Headlam, and declared in favour of purely secular teaching in the school, provided that the children were taken to High Mass on Sundays and Days of Obligation, and supplied with "A. H. S.'s" *Catholic Prayers*, to be paid for out of a voluntary rate. Against this proposition, at once paradoxical and insidious, the Dissenting ministers rose as one man. They detected in it the grin of Reaction under the mask of Liberality, and refused to entertain it on any terms. Minister after minister denounced the tyranny of sacerdotalism and dogma, and all demanded, in trumpet tones, the heaven-descended right to teach their own undenominationalism at other people's expense. This was unquestionably the prevailing sentiment of the meeting, and the ministers would have had it all their own way, only a discordant note was raised by the Social Democrats. The spokesman of this section proclaimed himself the sworn foe of

Joss-houses, whether Established or nonconforming; protested that, if any religion were taught, it ought to be the worship of the Goddess of Reason; clamoured for a daily lesson in the social writings of Mr. Bradlaugh; and repudiated as a wretched compromise the suggestion, which had commended itself to some of the more liberal-minded religionists, that a chapter of the Koran should be read as an alternative to the Bible on three mornings in the week.

Amid these distracted counsels it was obviously idle to seek for a unanimous vote. It was felt that if we went to a division we should seriously weaken the forces of freedom and should play into the hands of the Clericalists. It was therefore agreed to adjourn the debate, and I, as chairman, was instructed to consult the authorities of "The Liberal League," and report the result to an adjourned meeting. The Secretary of our Association, who is in close touch with Mr. W. B. Duffield, arranged an appointment; and two days later I presented myself at the offices of the League. The door was opened by a hall-porter in a uniform of Primrose plush, who ushered me with much

dignity into the Council Chamber of the League. The principal object which there met my eye was a group, rather more than life-sized, of allegorical statuary, representing Lord Rosebery mounted on Ladas, with the officials of the Liberal Headquarters tied to his stirrup.

I was welcomed with effusion by a prominent member of the Committee, but, I entirely failed to extract any clear guidance as to our course with reference to the Education Bill. "The fact is," he said, "it takes us a little by surprise. The Chief is in Italy; and his Groom of the Chambers, who presides at our committees in his absence, declines to commit himself. Asquith is a little hampered by some previous declarations, but no doubt they can be got over, and he will be able to support the Government when it comes to a vote. Grey has long had very strong convictions in favour of clerical control over education, and will be glad of an opportunity of avowing them. And I believe Haldane is going to write a pamphlet showing that the Narrower Sectarianism is the Higher Philosophy. Perhaps, under these circumstances, your association had better not pledge

itself to any definite line on the Bill. Just wait till the Chief comes home—he's safe to be back for the Spring Meeting; and then he'll write to *The Times*, or make a speech at the City Liberal Club, and we shall know what to say. Meanwhile, if you happen to be passing through Berkeley Square, it might be worth your while to call at No. 38, and have a chat with the Hall Porter. He knows a thing or two, and he's a tremendously sound Imperialist."

XVII

When I was describing the Church Congress at Brighton, I avowed a keen interest in Clerical Zoology. Just now I am "specializing," as educationists say, in that agreeable science. I have forsaken the wider fields of Genera and Species, and concentrate my attention on a particularly fine Specimen. Ever since the foggy night in March when Jack Bumpstead, to use his own phrase, "got it off his chest," a livelier iris has changed upon that burnished dove; or, to drop the Tennysonian metaphor, there has been a remarkable alteration in our curate's personal appearance since he was engaged to Bertha. His hair, which aforetime looked as if he had been dragged through a quickset hedge backwards, is now carefully parted and smoothly brushed, while a faint odour of lime-juice glycerine pervades the "boudoir" in which he spends most of his

time. His hands, which were a little unfinished and more than a little red, have, I fancy, been submitted to a process of manicure, and are thrust, all unwilling, into *gants de suède*. He has discarded the greased shooting-boots in which he used to perform his pastoral rounds, in favour of buttoned elegancies from the Burlington Arcade; and I have even heard rumours of possible developments in the way of patent leather. The shapeless jacket in which he formerly delighted is now reserved for parochial visitation. When he comes to see Bertha he wears a well-cut frock coat with braided edgings. From his watch-chain—no longer silvern, but golden—there hangs a large locket containing Bertha's photograph. The whole edifice is crowned by a "topper" of unusual brilliancy, and a neatly-folded umbrella with a hooked handle of bamboo completes the transformation.

Surveying these outward signs of the soft passion, Selina, who never does things by halves, proclaims that Jack looks, as he always did, like a thorough gentleman, and that for her own part she cannot conceive what any one

can see to admire in a namby-pamby barber's block—by which injurious phrase I understand her to indicate her former idol, Mr. Soulsby. That divine, himself scrupulous in all matters of attire, murmurs approval of Bumpstead's altered appearance. He says: "The interior man was always a gem of the purest ray; but the casket needed a little polishing."

The Fishers in Deep Waters, however, incline to a different view; and one or two of them, who have toiled for a considerable period and caught nothing, are disposed to resent our Bertha's easy victory, and declare that they always thought there was a rather worldly side to Mr. Bumpstead's character, and that he is now most suitably matched. But, after all, Bertha is the person principally concerned, and she is in a condition of radiant contentment. She has presented Jack with a silver cigarette-case and a sumptuously bound copy of *The Road-Mender*. They have just gone off together to the Academy, and have arranged with Selina and me to meet them for luncheon at the Carlton. A bunch of lilies of the valley in Jack's button-hole elicited some jocose com-

ment from those of us who remember his studied disregard of appearances this time last year; but to all such obvious banter he replies, with genial equanimity, that when a chap's got to take his best girl out, he's bound to tog himself up a bit.

It will be inferred from the foregoing particulars of our young friend's development that the course of true love is running smoother than it ran six weeks ago. This is so; and I attribute the improvement, in great measure, to Selina's decisive action at a critical moment. As we saw before, old Mr. Bumpstead tried conclusions with her, and failed—as many another had failed on many a previous occasion. As I contemplated his discomfiture, Matthew Arnold's lines rose unbidden to my lips:—

> "They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?
> Better men fared thus before thee;
> Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
> Hotly charged—and sank at last."

It needed only the substitution of "She" for "They," to make the analogy perfect. In his conversation with us about the engagement, old Bumpstead "fired his ringing shot" at Ab-

surdity and Impossibility, stipends and settlements; and "hotly charged" against the idea that he was to support a daughter-in-law as well as a son. But Selina was fully equal to the assault, and the grand old warrior "sank at last." If only he had consulted me beforehand I could have told him what would happen. He now uses a very different tone; says that it's natural enough for young people to fall in love; that certainly Jack has been uncommonly fortunate in finding such a girl as Bertha; that a father must, if necessary, even pinch himself a little in order to make things possible; and that he could not bear the feeling that his son had any reason to wish him out of the way.

This chastened note is as music in the ears of Selina, who never yet was known to spare a conquered foe. "Absurd old creature!" she exclaims. "I thought he would come to his senses before long. I really believe he thought he could intimidate me with those great spectacles and that shining head. As if I was going to let dear little Bertha's life be ruined to please an old goose like that! It was nothing in the world but stinginess, and I hope I let him

see that I saw through him. Talking of his daughters' fortunes, indeed! As if any one didn't know perfectly well that he has always been horrid to those poor girls, and would never leave them a penny more than he is obliged to! And then his impudence in talking about a second marriage! Really, the vanity of these old creatures is more disgusting than their stinginess. But, all the same, my dear Robert, *you* needn't give yourself any credit. I firmly believe you would have let yourself be crowed over by that old goose, and talked into sacrificing Bertha, if I hadn't been there to keep you up to the mark. You have no more courage than a mouse, although you are such a size. It's I who always have to do the fighting."

It is bare justice to say that no lady of my acquaintance is better qualified for that particular function than my Selina, for whom life without controversy would have lost its savour. But the triumph of having subdued old Mr. Bumpstead does not account for the whole of her present elation: some part of it, I am persuaded, has its source in remoter memories

Mentally she is fighting all her battles o'er again, and thrice she routs her foes, and thrice she slays the slain. As she sees Jack Bumpstead figuratively (and not seldom literally) prone at her sister's feet, and glories in the triumph of her tactics, she recalls that long-distant evening at the Loamshire Hunt-Ball, when I "sate out" with her after supper, and she told old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer that I had proposed and she had accepted me.

Meanwhile I hear of certain transactions (which to my unaccustomed ear have something of a simoniacal sound) between old Mr. Bumpstead and the octogenarian Rector of Foxhole Magna; which, with the annexed parish of Foxhole Parva and the chapelry of Cubbington, has been, time out of mind, the Family Living of the Bumpsteads. But on these sacred topics a discreet silence is advisable; and it has been settled that, for the time being at any rate, Jack is to retain the curacy of St. Ursula's, and Bertha to energize, as usual, in her district. They are to be married at the end of July, and, on returning from their honeymoon, are to establish themselves in a "Bijou

Residence," which Selina has found for them in Lower Stucco Place. As far as I can see, Jack's contribution to the furnishing will consist chiefly of pipe-racks, pewter pots, and framed photographs of college groups and football-teams. But Bertha has a very pretty taste in decoration; makes long voyages of discovery to Wardour Street and Brompton Road, and is in constant correspondence with Maple and Liberty. Of course, the *trousseau* engages Selina's closest attention, and it is distinctly understood that dear old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer is to pay for it. In the matter of presents, Selina has refurbished some rather pretty amethysts which were given to her by an aunt in India, and may therefore escape recognition; and I have added an Oriental Zircon —a stone much to be commended to those who wish to combine splendour with economy. The Cashingtons, rightly determined to lead the fashion of Stuccovia, have given a diamond star, and the Bounderleys have followed at a respectful distance with a coral locket. Old Lady Farringford has sent a print of Queen Victoria's coronation in a maple frame, which

formerly adorned her back dining-room—not, of course, because it costs her nothing, but because "You see, my dear, it's so appropriate to the present year."

Tom Topham-Sawyer, with delicate pleasantry, says: "I suppose you expect me to fork out a cheque; and all I can say is that, if you do, you'll find yourselves jolly well mistaken. My mother's jointure is quite ridiculous for the size of the property. I don't believe she can spend half of it. The girls' fortunes were settled in the days when land paid. My income isn't half what it was when I succeeded; and Beach, with his blooming Budgets, has pretty well done for me. It's all mighty fine to talk about Income-Tax. Pretty soon it will be all Tax and no Income. So if I can come down with something towards the expense of the Breakfast, that's just about as much as I can manage."

It will be inferred from this ingenuous allocution that Bertha is to be married at The Sawpits. At first there was some talk of a wedding at St. Ursula's, and it was to have been made an occasion of high parochial

festivity. Mr. Soulsby wrote a new wedding-hymn—or, as he preferred to call it, a "sacred epithalamium"—which was to have been sung to music composed by Mrs. Soulsby. The Fishers in Deep Waters were to have walked in procession behind the bridesmaids, and the bridegroom was to have been attended by a deputation of grateful shop-assistants, whose teeth he had knocked down their throats at the Parochial Club. All this would have been, to use the Vicar's favourite phrase, "very teaching"; but Bertha set her face against it with unmistakable determination. The fact is that Mr. Soulsby's matrimonial ministrations are a little at a discount in Stuccovia. His taste in arranging an arch of artificial palms over the chancel gate is unequalled, and his white stole, embroidered with love-knots and arrows, is the envy of all his clerical brethren; but his oratorical instinct sometimes runs away with him, and the extempore harangues which he substitutes for the prescribed discourse about Abraham and Sarah are not always felicitous. Only the other day the Barrington-Bounderleys' eldest girl was married at St.

Ursula's to General Padmore — who certainly had one wife in Brompton Cemetery, even if we leave out of account his Indian experiences, of which old Lady Farringford had heard a good deal from her late husband. As this blushing bridegroom rose slowly from his knees, rendered a little stiff

> "By pangs arthritic that infest the toe
> Of libertine excess,"

the undaunted Soulsby opened his discourse: "Dear brother and sister, you are entering on a new phase of being. Strange and untried experiences lie before you. You will encounter little trials of temper, little demands for daily self-surrender, of which you have hitherto known nothing;" and, after a good deal of maundering eloquence on this infelicitous topic, ended by saying that the knot which he had just tied was tied for ever, and that General and Mrs. Padmore were man and wife to all eternity.

This misplaced rhetoric roused all Selina's ire. "Did you ever hear such stuff?" she exclaimed as the wedding guests fought their way into the porch. "*Strange and untried*

experiences, indeed! Poor Hildegarde is inexperienced enough, I admit; but it must be forty years if it's an hour since that dreadful old General was first married. And as for all that nonsense about Eternity, I should like to know what the last Mrs. Padmore thinks of it—let alone the yellow lady in Upper Burmah. Really, Mr. Soulsby might have found out that the bridegroom had been married again and again, and have contented himself with the Prayer Book, which, at any rate, steers clear of these difficulties."

It probably was the recollection of this oratorical miscarriage which governed Bertha's decision. Anyhow, she said that she must and would be married at home, and that the ceremony should be performed by their dear old Vicar, Mr. Borum, who had christened her and prepared her for Confirmation. To this arrangement Selina, who had been a little apprehensive that Bertha might wish to be married from our house, and might thereby involve us in a good deal of expense, yielded a fervent assent; adding that though, to be sure, poor old Borum mumbled dreadfully, and generally

lost his place, still he was infinitely preferable to Mr. Soulsby, whose flummery addresses, all about mystic bonds and eternal unions, had often made her feel quite uncomfortable.

As I write these lines, the chilly blast of May shakes the window-panes, and the unwelcome wild North-Easter penetrates the jerry-built walls of Stucco Square. These cheerful tokens of incipient summer remind me that we are approaching a season dedicated to national festivity. Even the preparations for Bertha's wedding must relax their intensity till after the Coronation, or, as Soulsby prefers to call it, "the Sacring." The premonitory symptoms are already beginning to make themselves felt. Even the placid pulse of Stuccovia beats more quickly, and the madness stirs all bloods. Old Lady Farringford, who improvidently cut up the train which she wore in 1838 into pelisses for the present Lord Farringford and his brothers, declines to attend the ceremony, but has enriched the Parish Magazine with some "Recollections of the last Coronation," which her admirers call "chatty" and "chirpy," and her enemies stig-

matize as doddering. Soulsby has conceived a highly spiritual design for the Parochial Dinner to the Poor: the eating and drinking are to be cut down to mixed biscuits and lemonade, and there is to be no tobacco; but each diner is to receive a "Souvenir Edition of the Sacring Service," printed on vellum and bound in Royal red.

The Barrington-Bounderleys, who will be in the Abbey, are naturally a little elated. Mrs. Bounderley gives private views of the gown which she intends to wear, and Bounderley retails conversations with Lord Hugh Cecil about the spiritual significance of the ceremony. "I said to him, 'Hugh, my dear boy, you've put the thing in an entirely new light to me. Your father couldn't have done it better. By the way, I hope there's no truth in this rumour of his retiring directly after the Coronation? Tell him, from me, that if he'll stick to us, we'll stick to him.'"

For some time past Selina has been worrying my life out about places for the Procession. She had "no notion of paying a fortune for

the privilege of getting sunstroke on an open stand," and was bitterly sarcastic at my failure to obtain seats at Boodles'.

"That's you all over, Robert—muddling away all your time in those stupid clubs; and then, when just for once in a lifetime they might be useful, making a mess of the whole thing. You will never persuade me that you couldn't have got the seats if you had been a little sharper. My own belief is that you didn't try."

"That was the song, the song for me" during the greater part of April and May; but presently the tune was changed by a most opportune intervention.

Young Lady Farringford, whose husband is always fishing when he isn't hunting or shooting and therefore has no house in London, wrote to Selina, and made an unexpected offer. With a magnificence worthy of her father, Solomon P. Van Oof, who made the corner in canvas-backed ducks, this queenly daughter of the great Republic offered to take our modest residence at a hundred pounds a week for the month of June, provided that we left servants in the house, writing-paper in the blot-

ting-books, flowers in the vases, and dinner ordered for 9 sharp. For one moment Selina hesitated. *Budge*, said the Fiend of Cupidity. *Budge not*, said the Conscience of Birth. But the decision was not long deferred.

"Certainly, it is very disgusting that we should see nothing of the Coronation, and people like Lady Farringford and Mrs. Bounderley should actually be in the Choir. But, as Robert has mismanaged so dreadfully at his clubs, I suppose it can't be helped. And, to tell you the truth, I shall be glad of a little quiet after all the toil of getting Bertha's *trousseau*. So we shall go down to Loamshire, and stay with mamma till the wedding is over. Of course, Bertha will go with us, and Jack will come down as often as mamma will have him. And, after the wedding, there will be visits; and, what with one thing and what with another, I don't suppose we shall be settled here again before the winter."

And so my fate is fixed. For an indefinite period I am to be exiled from my beloved London, and of necessity the LONDONER'S LOG-BOOK comes to an end. "To-morrow we part

company, and each man for himself sails over the *ingens æquor*."

With prophetic gaze I look ahead, and see the day of departure, and the luggage-laden cabs standing at our door. Muggins is struggling with Selina's largest trunk, and a little group of neighbours is gathered on the pavement.

Robert: "Good-bye, Soulsby; don't overdo yourself with that Parochial Dinner. Good-bye, Bounderley; let me know if the King nods to you at the Coronation. Good-bye, Jack; I suppose we shall see you down at The Sawpits before very long. Good-bye, everybody."

Selina: "*Do* get in, Robert. I'm sure you have said good-bye often enough. We're not going to the North Pole. I know we shall be late. How tiresome you are! and what an age Muggins takes to get that trunk up! Robert, if you don't get in I shall certainly go on without you. Euston Station, cabman, and please drive as fast as you can. ROBERT, GET IN!"

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